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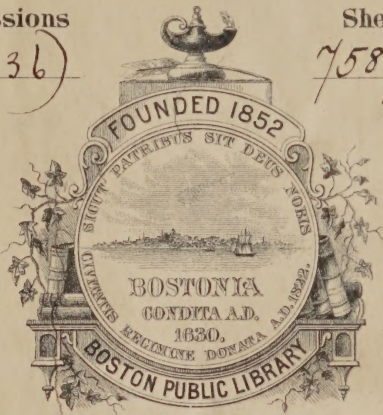

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FRONTISPIECE.

MATERNAL SOLICITUDE.

MATERNAL SOLICITUDE

FOR

A DAUGHTER'S BEST INTERESTS.

BY MRS. TAYLOR,

OF ONGAR.

Author of 'Practical Hints to Young Females.'

.....

"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear." *David.*

.....

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Rev. C. D. Bradlee
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ADVERTISEMENT.

To any who may glance at the following pages, it will be unnecessary to observe, that they were not designed by the writer for the public eye:—that they were, that which they profess to have been, the effusions of a mother's solicitude for the welfare of a beloved child; for there is too little appearance of study throughout, to excite a suspicion that the character, or the circumstances, are assumed. A parent, who, from increasing infirmities, found it difficult frequently to converse with her child, adopted this method of conveying instruction, and of presenting the fruits of experience to an inexperienced mind. Had she written with any further view, much might have been added, and much repressed; but till it was suggested to her, that what was likely to benefit an individual, might, if communicated, become useful to others, she entertained no design beyond the limits of a single family. To other families, in consequence of that suggestion, this little effort of maternal anxiety is now commended; without solicitude for its reputation; but with that affectionate concern for youth and inexperience, which is natural to one, who has been long

A MOTHER.

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INTRODUCTION.

MY DEAR CHILD,

You are not entirely ignorant of the time and labour which the following pages have cost me, because you have seen this book so long and so frequently under my hand, although you did not know for what purpose it was intended; may I not reasonably expect that you will bestow on it a proportionate degree of attention? I assure you, that not one of the ensuing Meditations was the work of merely an hour or two; and if so short a period is all that *you* will ever devote to them, I shall have bestowed on you much labour in vain. On the contrary, I would hope, that you will read them deliberately, and with attention, (suppose one every Sabbath evening) retaining the subject on your mind during the week. And do I ask too much, if I express a hope, that at future periods of your life they will obtain an occasional perusal? However deficient in their style, the *subjects* on which they treat are of the greatest importance; and many of them will be applicable to your maturer age.

I am aware that there is a considerable number which some would call *gloomy;* more, perhaps, than would accord with the present system of instruction, which aims rather to allure, than to alarm: but the same perverted principle which turns a deaf ear to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely, is, in general, so little affected by the most serious representations which can be made

of the uncertainty of life, and the certainty of death, and a world beyond the grave, that I am under no apprehension of your imbibing an undue distaste for the world; or, from a sense of the shortness and uncertainty of your continuance in it, becoming unsusceptible of its lawful enjoyments: but I shall think myself amply repaid, if the hints I have afforded should check your too sanguine expectations from temporal objects, such as they appear to the youthful eye; if they should moderate your desires, and confirm the lesson you have been accustomed to hear—that in this lower world is not your rest; convincing you, that the most important concern of life, is preparation for that state to which I so frequently allude.

It is with this view chiefly, though not solely, that I have written; and should my labours answer the purpose for which they are intended, I shall congratulate myself as having gained a great point; for those who are sufficiently convinced of the vanity of the world to inquire the road to a better country, will not lack directions to the gate by which they are to enter, but will hear many a friendly voice saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it:' and those who most frequently meditate on Death, are also most likely to inquire after eternal life. That He who has so often manifested his mighty power by rendering successful the feeblest efforts, may crown these with his divine blessing, is the earnest prayer, my dear child, of

YOUR AFFECTIONATE MOTHER.

MATERNAL SOLICITUDE, &c.

No. I.

"And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days."

GENESIS, chap. xlix. ver. 1.

"THE time drew near that Jacob must die:" he therefore, with true paternal affection, summoned up all his remaining strength, that he might bless his children, and apprise them of what should befall them "in the last days." The time also approaches, my dear child, when your mother must die; how near that awful period may be, I cannot tell; I know not the day of my death: it behoves me, therefore, to work while it is called to-day; and how can I be better employed than in promoting the spiritual advantages of my children? Be seriously attentive then, my child, to the following pages, as you would to the words of a dying parent, while, in humble

imitation of the venerable Patriarch, I tell you also that which shall "befall you in the last days."

I can pretend to no prophetic knowledge, independent of what the sacred volume communicates, and of that which results from my own experience: of both these I have availed myself, and have introduced such cautions and directions as seem the most essential, at a period of life when the want of experience exposes the young traveller to so many dangers. Those parents have lived to little purpose, who are not qualified, by their own observation, to guide the footsteps of their children along the road in which they have travelled themselves. If we can give them no warnings, afford them no counsel, advise them in no difficulty; if we can advance nothing but what they already know, either our talent for observation is very limited, or that of our children must be uncommonly acute.

Though these pages are immediately addressed to you, my dear child, as more suitable to your age and circumstances; yet I am not without hope, that others of my family, who will occasionally peruse them, may glean a few hints from this my labour of love: but while I imagine them thus surrounding me, I shall not "guide my

hands wittingly," as Jacob did, setting one before the other, though the Sovereign Disposer may so deal by you, in the course of his providence; but for me I say to you all, from my very heart, "The God before whom your father Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless you:" though I cannot describe the possessions which may hereafter fall to your lot, or determine whether you shall ever have a foot of land to call your own, yet I have an humble confidence that your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure: and if, happily, you are partakers of divine grace, then the heavenly Canaan is yours, that exceeding good land, your title to which cannot be disannulled or taken away.

Of the present world, no portion will ever be yours, of which your ancestors became possessed by their valour: yet, as "in Christ there is neither male nor female," I shall not be charged with impropriety or indecorum, should I, for your encouragement in the *spiritual* warfare, and as a stimulus to your own exertions, declare, that I also have obtained victories over my enemies, with "my sword and with my bow."

Of the particular circumstances that shall befall you, I must remain ignorant; but this I can assure you, as well from my own experience, as from the sacred oracles, "That in the world you shall have tribulation." That it may not assail you unawares, or altogether unprepared, is one of the objects of the following pages; but above all, to familiarize your mind to that most certain, most important of all events, *death*.

Whatever else may befall you "in the last days," know, that however gay and healthy you may now be, the season will arrive, (unless, indeed, your days are cut off in the midst,) "when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves; when the grinders shall cease, because they are few, and those that look out of the windows shall be darkened: when the doors shall be shut in the streets, and the sound of the grinding be low; when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail, because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets; when the silver cord shall be loosed, and the golden bowl broken, and the pitcher shall be broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken

at the cistern; then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return to God who gave it." These are events that shall assuredly "befall you in the latter days;" of which I may venture to forewarn you without a possibility of being mistaken.

"I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!" Impressed with the important truths of his salvation, I also may say, "I have waited" for its enjoyment and completion. I have also waited to see my dear children successively influenced by the same grace: and may offer up my humble thanks, that one parent hath not planted, nor the other watered, without some evidences of his divine blessing.

As for me, still following my venerable pattern, I may say, at such and such a place I was bereaved of this and that dear relative; "there they died, and there they were buried." What it is to return from the graves of such, my dear child, you have yet to learn; it will be well, if, when your turn comes, such bereavements teach you the wholesome lesson of holding earthly comforts as though you had them not, and to remember, that

The dear delights you here enjoy,
And fondly call your own,

Are but short comforts, borrow'd now,
To be repaid anon.

As I have no "Simeons and Levis" on whom to pass a censure, which must lacerate a parent's heart; and if I had, having no prophetic spirit to reveal how such should be "scattered or divided," I betake myself to the more pleasing task of commending you to God, and to the word of his grace, and of praying for the divine blessing on what I am about to advance, that while I reveal what is to "befall my family in the last days," they may lay it to heart.

Let this book, written with my *own hand*, be preserved, my dear child, for your *mother's* sake: and if I might hope that it may be the means of setting you but one step forward in your journey towards Zion, it would cheer me in that hour, "when flesh and heart fail," and when all terrestrial objects are receding from my sight. Should the heavenly Canaan be then in view; could I, when taking a last look of my surrounding family, hope soon to welcome them there; how serenely then might I "gather up my feet into the bed, and yield up the ghost, and be gathered to my people."

No. II.

"Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?"

GENESIS, chap. iii. ver. 11.

To the man who had hitherto known only the smiles of his Creator, this was an appalling interrogation, and implied the ruin of unborn millions. Who, that has tasted the bitter fruits of his first transgression, (and who has not tasted them?) can avoid a sensation of resentment, towards a being, who, blessed with so many advantages for his perfect rectitude, should, nevertheless, thus wilfully involve his posterity in misery and ruin, and entail a threescore years and ten of labour and sorrow on numbers of his offspring, for one (perhaps momentary) gratification ?

As the just desert of his crime, he was expelled from Paradise; and its blissful gates are forever barred against his degenerate posterity. Ah, my dear child! though your short existence has been comparatively a happy one, yet, thirteen years have been sufficient to convince you, (if not from your own experience, at least by the

moans and complaints of others) that "man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward;" but, my child, you will employ your time to much better advantage, by turning your attention to the *effects* of sin in yourself, than to the original cause in your first parents: look no longer at the "rock from whence you were hewn, nor at the hole of the pit whence you were digged," but at the impenetrable stone that was taken from thence; thither turn all your indignation, where alone indignation can profit: "lay your hand on your mouth, and your mouth in the dust, and cry, Unclean, unclean;" nay, "smite upon your breast," and say, "God be merciful to *me*, a sinner."

You are now probably in your evening retirement, and you may imagine your offended Maker addressing you, even *you*, now in the cool of the day, and saying, "Hast *thou* also eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee not to eat?" Reflect not upon your past life, in general, but upon this day in particular, and you will be constrained to acknowledge that such and such a thing beguiled you, and you did eat. Hast thou eaten? Then cursed is the ground for *thy* sake: thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to *thee*, till thou return to the dust from whence thou wast

taken." This day you have sinned; expect not to find yourself in an Eden tomorrow; but rather, wonder that the penalty of your transgressions is not exacted of you to the uttermost. Have you eaten; and can you anticipate other than "fiery indignation, and tribulation, and anguish?" Do you not stand trembling and self-condemned, as did your first parents, expecting the sentence to go forth immediately against you? But to them the promised seed was announced; to you the salvation is proclaimed; and though you may never set your unhallowed feet on Eden's happy ground; yet a better country is offered to you, an inheritance not purchased with "corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ," where no "flaming sword" guards the entrance, but where the redeemed are ushered in with a "Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

But as you have eaten, you are doomed to be a wanderer in the wilderness, whither you are driven, "to till the ground, which is cursed for your sake, and to eat your bread in the sweat of your brow;" for where are the enjoyments that can be obtained for nothing? Do the rich possess them? Verily, what many of these call pleasure, is pur-

chased by the severest drudgery! Nor can you participate in the most innocent satisfactions without exertion of some kind. It is no longer an uninterrupted spring; for lo! "the clouds return after the rain!" The chilling blast, the nipping frost, the destructive tempest shall blight or destroy the work of many a laborious day: and though you know not that you shall ever reap what you sow, yet sow you must, or you certainly can never reap. Obey then the divine mandate, my child, and be "diligent in business, while fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." You have eaten, and have thereby forfeited every comfort; but you are not banished into a wilderness so sterile but that many a delicious fruit, many a fragrant flower will reward your labour; and he that made "coats of skins" for your rebellious ancestors, continues, with a munificent hand, to supply the returning wants of their degenerate posterity. "Having therefore food and raiment, learn," not only "to be content, but to abound" in thankfulness and gratitude to the Author of all your mercies, though by actual as well as original transgression, you have forfeited every comfort at his hands.

No. III.

"And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been."

GENESIS, chap. xlvii. ver. 9.

THOSE who have lived but a short time in the world, are as ill qualified to make an accurate estimate of the brevity of life, as they are of its evils; few sorrows having as yet fallen to their lot, their hopes and expectations are sanguine, their desires impetuous: and as their imaginations represent an uninterrupted scene of prosperity, they think Time slow in his progress, because their pursuit is ever directed towards a continued succession of varieties.

As you, my dear child, are one of those who have lived a very little while in the world, a year, which is almost a twelfth part of your life, must seem a long period, especially if, at the conclusion of it, some wish is to be gratified on which you have set your heart: you will not then readily assent to the Patriarch's assertion, that one hundred and thirty years are few! nor even be-

lieve those of your contemporaries, who now make the same complaint with still greater propriety. Notwithstanding that the infant, as soon as it enters this world of sin, feels that it is a world of sorrow, yet the experience of twelve years is insufficient to persuade, that the characteristic of man's life is evil. Such will be disposed to think (if they think at all) that this was the exclamation of an infirm old man, taking a retrospective view of the delightful and protracted scenes through which he had passed, with the dim eye of age: but, whatever may be their opinions, these are truths, to which their assent will eventually be compelled, however their days may be prolonged; and to which their lacerated hearts, at some future period, will bear ample testimony.

Are not our days few, or why are they compared to a tale that is told, to a dream, to a vision of the night; and man, frail man, to a flower, that cometh forth in the morning, and in the evening is cut down and withereth? Are they not few, when that these "afflictions endure but for a moment," is said to encourage those who are ready to faint under them; those who have ascertained, by sad experience, that they are not only few but evil?

I would not, my dear child, cast a gloom over your brighter days, by melancholy forebodings; nevertheless, I cannot present you with a more salutary truth, than that "here is not your rest." This is the best method of qualifying your joys, by disposing you to possess temporal blessings with a holy indifference, and to inquire after those, which, once obtained, cannot be taken from you: and of mitigating your sorrows, by preparing you to encounter them. Instead, then, of being appalled at the prospect before you, you will turn it to advantage and good account, by preparing for events of every kind, and by forming a proper estimation of the uncertainty and shortness of your continuance here on earth.

If your days are few, and you have much to accomplish, it behoves you not to procrastinate; and as you know not, however bright your sun may be, but that it may go down long before noon, you will do well to begin your most important work in the morning: this will conduce to your everlasting advantage, whatever else is left unfinished. How cheering, in the midst of all your exertions, to reflect, that though your days are few and evil, you are travelling to that country where days and nights shall cease, and where all tears shall be wiped away from your eyes!

And you will do well, my dear child, to recollect, of the dear friends you possess, that their days are few and evil also: this will insure a kind and affectionate carriage towards them, seeing you cannot enjoy their society long, and that while with you, they have so many unavoidable evils to encounter. Are their days evil? embitter them not, then, by any wilful misconduct of yours. Is their yoke heavy? do you in no wise add to their yoke. Does the world chastise them with whips? your unkindness would chastise them with scorpions! for, in proportion as you are dear to their hearts, your little finger would be heavier than the loins of others.

Finally; extend this consideration to all around you; as few and evil are the days of every creature you behold, you may, at once, by lightening their sorrows, lengthen their days; you may ease many a way-worn traveller of his burden: you may see many a one by the way-side, wounded, either in spirit, in circumstances, or reputation, into whose wounds, like the good Samaritan, you may pour the oil and wine of benevolence or friendship, and from whom you may reap "the blessings of those who were ready to perish."

Such dispositions as these, founded on gospel principles, and not upon a pharisaical expectation

of ensuring heaven thereby, afford the best hope, that when these few and evil days of our pilgrimage are concluded, we shall have an abundant entrance into the heavenly world, and be made partakers of that eternal weight of glory : compared with which, all our past afflictions will appear to have been light, and their duration but for a moment.

No. IV.

"And Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers, in the city of David his father; and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead."

2 KINGS, chap. xv. ver. 38.

As my chief design, in this my work and labour of love, is to direct your attention, my dear child, to spiritual objects, I cannot devise a more effectual method for the accomplishment of my purpose, than in a variety of views, presenting to your young mind the brevity and the vanity of life. I have made several of my first meditations chiefly subservient to that end; and I trust you will not be weary of that which may appear like repetition; "for, to write the same things to you, to me is not grievous, and to you it is safe."

Let us see, then, what useful information may be derived from the very brief history of Jotham, who lived forty-one years in the world, sixteen of which he sat on the throne of Judah. No doubt he had, in common with the rest of mankind, a mixture of prosperity and adversity, pub-

lic or private: he had his friends and his enemies, his hopes and his fears; and the speck of time he sojourned here, was, in his estimation, of more interest and importance than all the centuries that preceded it, though each in succession distinguished by "kings and mighty men, and heroes, which were of old, men of renown." And yet it is observable, that all of this self-important being, which is transmitted to posterity, is contained in seven verses! In one of which, however, this is recorded: "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord:" An honourable testimony! from which we may infer, that whatever were his temporal achievements, he was, in the truest sense of the word, a valiant man, and a hero. Was he not great, to maintain his integrity in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom he lived, shining as a light in the world? Was he not valiant, resisting unto blood a corrupt nature, and innumerable spiritual enemies? Was he not persevering and resolute, seeing that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life;" and that, among "the few who go in thereat," so small a proportion of the rich and noble is included? But millions have passed away, before and since Jotham, of whom it is not now

known that they ever existed! These, in their turns, experienced the vicissitudes, and were agitated by the various passions, that are incident to mankind. Many a bright genius, and many a hero, have lived and died within the walls of a cottage; their virtues, their talents never cultivated or brought into action. Of whom we may exclaim,

"How many a flower is born to blush unseen."

But the unavailing sigh is checked by the reflection, that however obscure their situation in the world, if they were partakers of divine grace, their names are recorded in the book of life; and they will be owned in that day, when the Judge shall summon all the nations of the earth before him, to receive their final reward. O, what millions of glorified bodies will then arise from the dust, and be crowned with immortal honour, who, in every sense of the word, were sown in dishonour! Who were unknown, or, perhaps, even despised of men; but who will then be owned and acknowledged before both men and angels! The King of Glory has many a rich gem deposited in the earth now, which he will then place in his crown, to the astonishment of an assembled world. In that day, too, what a black catalogue of crimes will be exhibited; the perpetrators of which were never known beyond their

native spot, and scarcely remembered beyond the limits of their earthly existence! Crimes of sufficient magnitude to doom them to eternal perdition, though many of them were never witnessed by mortal eye, were never revealed to mortal ear; crimes, by which no human being was ever injured; which lay concealed and cherished in the heart where they were formed; but which, however long forgotten, will be brought again to remembrance at that awful period, "when God will bring every secret thing into judgment, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Need I suggest to my dear child the obvious improvement to be derived from these considerations? Need I admonish her to read her own fate in the history of others? Have all the conspicuous characters of which you have read, my child, passed away in successive generations? Where, then, will be my *** and her mother, and all she knows and loves, in a few years? They also will sleep with their fathers; and others yet unborn, will rise up in their stead, to act their part for a while on earth, and then return to their dust and be forgotten, with their progenitors.

May it at least be recorded of them, as of Jotham, that "they did that which was right in the sight of the Lord."

No. V.

"Man goeth to his long home."
Eccles. chap. xii. ver. 5.

The contemplation of death, to those who are in the midst of life, cannot be pleasant to nature; to reconcile us to it, must be the work of divine grace. In proportion as that all-powerful principle is in exercise, this last enemy will be contemplated with composure; temporal things, of whatever description, will appear in their proper point of view; and the attention will be fixed on those awful realities, towards which we are all hastening.

To promote such beneficial purposes, and to inure my own mind to objects of the deepest concernment, I have been led to contemplate the state of this perishing body of mine, about which I am now so interested, when it shall descend to "the place appointed for all living." I have reconnoitered my future abode, and taken a minute survey of the dwelling of which I must shortly be the tenant; and as the ideas, thus produced, have not been altogether unprofitable to myself,

I present them to my ***, in the hope that to her they may prove of some use, as well as to me.

My imagination, then, has painted a train of mourners, following my inanimate clay to its *long home:* I have heard the convulsive sobs of those who were so closely twined round every fibre of this heart, while it continued to beat, as they took the farewell look, when departing from the brink of my solitary dwelling: I have followed the mourning group back to the place, now forever bereft of its late inhabitant; and though grief sits on every face, and though the tear of sorrow dims every eye; yet a mixture of tranquil joy diffuses itself from heart to heart, as each contemplates the yet remaining circle; and family affections, and family feelings seem to be invigorated by the painful breach that has been made. But while they are thus sharing and communicating their pains and their pleasures, my new abode admits no such tender sensations; no loved image charms my eye; no social sounds reach my ear. It is for me to say to corruption, "*Thou* art *my* father," and to the worm, "thou art my mother and my sister."

And now night spreads her sable mantle over all surrounding objects; the monuments of my companions are no longer visible. The clock

strikes! but no longer am I interested in the swiftness of the passing hours. With me the awful mandate has been fulfilled, that time shall be no longer, and my ears are forever sealed to its friendly memento.

"The night cometh, and also the morning;" the cheerful morning, when man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour; but with me there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge. Happy, thrice happy will it then be, if the work that was once assigned me, and for which I was sent into the world, has been finished; if, indeed, I have "accomplished, as an hireling, my day;" then, however gloomy may be my dwelling in the estimation of the living, to me it will prove a bed of rest, a bed of sweet repose, a secure retreat, however the storm and tempest may agitate the upper world. The wind may howl, the rain may descend, the snow may conceal my humble hillock; but I shall sleep unmolested and secure: many a time have I felt their rage, many a time have they beat on my defenceless head; but they have done their worst, and the asylum now allotted me is impregnable to their violence.

And now the winter is past, and even the hearts of those who have deposited their dear relative in the grave, are revived by the cheerful

season. "Come," say they, "the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the time of singing birds is come, let us go forth into the fields, and let us remain in the villages. Summer's joys succeed, and autumn's golden stores; and now the days of mourning are ended; the external badges of sorrow are laid aside; but not so the dear remembrance. Time, aided by the revolving seasons, and the affairs and business of life, has blunted the acuteness of the feelings; but the once loved image is not effaced from the heart, which will continue to send forth many a sigh, notwithstanding the changes and revolutions which a few years may produce. Ah! in a few years, how may the circumstances of our once united circle, of the dear individuals who now compose it, be changed! How widely may they be dispersed! How diverse their lot! how altered their views! What revolutions, too, may they have witnessed, not only among their particular connexions, but in the world in general! They may have beheld nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and may have trembled lest they should be overwhelmed in the general ruin; but no tidings of calamities, public or private, assail my repose: here "the wicked cease from troubling, here the weary are at rest,"

I do not hear the sexton's spade disturbing my silent dwelling; nor do I perceive the cheerful rays of light that again illume my narrow house! The solemn tolling bell I do not hear, nor the sound of many footsteps! Now it tolls quickly! and now it ceases! Ah! a new inhabitant arrives! It is my dear ***: she has deposited another and another of our dear circle by my side, and I welcomed them not; and now, a way-worn traveller, herself arrives, and lays down her head among us, on the bed of rest!

A few more revolving years, and all she knew, and all she loved, are swept away by the flood of time: other generations spring up, that know not us; and these, in turn, give place to their successors; till the lapse of time since we lived must not be counted by years, but by centuries. The effort of affection to immortalize my name, affords an additional proof of the perishing nature of all created things; the tender eulogium penned by connubial or filial love has disappeared and sunk into the earth, to meet the dust whose memory it was designed to record; and time, by gradual strokes, has obliterated the name on the scarcely remaining stone. Even the venerable edifice that marked the place of our interment, has fallen into a heap of ruins! Generations have passed away

since the sacred rites were performed within its walls; and many who were united in sweet acts of devotion, and songs of praise, are now assembled with the Church triumphant, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Here and there a mouldering arch informs the curious traveller, that this spot was once devoted to the worship of his God! And if he is wise, and if he is pious, he will reflect with joy, that though these temples, made with hands, perish and decay; yet He, for whose service they were erected, continues, and is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

But the heavens themselves "wax old as a garment;" then how much more shall the most durable edifice yield to the unrelenting hand of Time! Thus shall these ruins be levelled to the ground; thus shall every vestige of them disappear, till the once frequented spot shall be no longer venerated! The flocks and herds may browse and trample here, when no relic remains of the precious dust that lies beneath! Or, perhaps, the rural hamlet, or busy town, or populous city, may rise on the site of this lonely building, and a scull or a few unconnected bones, accidentally discovered in digging for a foundation, may produce a conjecture that this might once have been a burying-place! Ah! busy mortals! read

your own fate in these, and pay them the respect due to kindred bones, by depositing them decently in the place whence they were torn. Yes, fellow mortals, you are welcome to build, and to plant, and to act your parts in this short and busy scene, though it be over our perishing clay. Much should I love to slumber unmolested till the last trumpet shall sound: yet I would rather that the populous city should flourish over my head, vying with Babylon and Tyre in riches and grandeur, than that, for its iniquity, ruin and desolation should overspread my country. Let the sound of the millstone, and the voice of the piper and harper be heard, rather than that of the owl, and the bittern, and the cormorant! Silent and desolate must my dwelling be; but, O! let not *such* desolation, *such* silence, reign over my once-beloved land! Profound will my sleep be, whether peace or tumult reign above.

Ah! the dreary ages that roll away in slow succession, and no one knocks at the door of my prison! Surely "the Lord hath forsaken me: my God hath forgotten me!"—"Where is the promise of his coming?" For, since I fell asleep, all things continue as they were. But "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness." "The vision is for an ap-

pointed time; it will surely come, it will not tarry." Hark! I hear a sound! It is the voice of the archangel! "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment!" bursts on my astonished ear. Joyful summons for me, if I can welcome my celestial spirit to reanimate my sleeping dust! and welcome to these eyes those precious bodies from whom I have been so long separated! May it be ours to say, "Here are we, and the children whom thou hast given us," *every one* of them. How gloriously improved since our last painful separation! They were sown natural bodies, in weakness and in dishonour; they are raised spiritual bodies, in glory and in power! Why, then, do my thoughts thus delight to wander among the mansions of the dead, and not rather in that land of light and consolation, into which the happy spirit is ushered, at the moment of its disengagement from the body of clay?

At that moment, while friends are lamenting over the inanimate corpse, the disembodied and disencumbered spirit is triumphing before the throne of God; and while they are occupied with the cares, the businesses, and the vanities of life, its divine employ is to praise Him who redeemed it, and washed it from all iniquity in his own blood. While nights and days follow each other,

in rapid succession, in the lower world, in the world above "there is no night, neither need of the light of the sun;" for the "Lamb in the midst of the throne is the light thereof;" and while edifices the most durable are crumbling into decay, the spirits of the just are safely lodged, in "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." While wars and fightings are agitating the nether world, peace, everlasting peace reigns undisturbed in those blissful regions; that eternal kingdom, where are no revolutions, no vicissitudes: "where the inhabitants go no more out."

These are the contemplations, these the prospects, that enable the Christian to exclaim, "O Death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?" At the same time he is constrained to "work out his salvation with fear and trembling;" knowing that while Christ is carefully watching over the precious dust of his people, there are multitudes lying in the grave like *sheep*, Death preying upon them, who will have no part in this blessed resurrection: for, after all, "broad is the road and wide is the gate that leadeth to destruction; and many there are that go in thereat." Ah! could I be assured that none of my dear family would be missing in that day!—But their

hearts, I cannot know; alas, I do not know my own! "God be merciful to me a sinner!" is the most I dare utter before a heart-searching God: And if my dear children can say but this much, with the self-abasement and the faith of the publican, I humbly hope we shall obtain mercy in that day, of Him who "delighteth not in the death of sinners, but had rather that they should turn from their evil ways and live." Then we shall have to say, "Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy name be all the glory."

No. VI.

"Soul, take thine ease; thou hast goods laid up for many years."

LUKE, chap. xii. ver. 19.

You are not arrived at that period of life, my dear child, in which to solace yourself in the possession of the worldling's treasure. His lands, his houses, and his bags, have as yet no charms for you; for, as the Apostle observes, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, and I thought as a child:" so, for the most part, you are at present occupied with, and delight in, childish things. Nevertheless, as there are treasures which your age may view with delight and confidence, I will, on the contrary, show you in what respects you may resemble him, who, with all his contrivances and forecast, had no better title bestowed upon him by the voice of wisdom, than that of a fool!

In the first place, you may be ready, my child, to say, "Soul, take thine ease; thou hast goods laid up for many years," with respect to your dear friends and relations. You have parents,

brethren, and sisters, and possibly flatter yourself, that, surrounded with these, you are well defended from the calamities of life. You commit all your care to them, depending on their care for you: but melancholy lessons have not been wanting in your short life, which may teach you the folly of too firm a reliance on the creature, and warn you how soon you may be bereft of all you hold so dear; and have to sally forth into the world, "to wander and to weep." "Trust not, therefore, in an arm of flesh;" for, "Cursed is man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm:" but while you duly appreciate your mercies, (and great mercies they are) yet, "hold them as though you held them not." "Cease from man, whose breath in his nostrils;" and place your dependence on Him, who has said, "When father and mother forsake thee, then I, the Lord, will take thee up."

Again, say not, "Soul, take thine ease, I have health laid up for many years," because you enjoy the blessing of health to-day; for how know you what may take place tomorrow? It is now twenty years since your mother rose one morning in tolerable health; and, before night, was attacked by a malady, under which she has been suffering ever since; the melancholy effects of which you witness every day.

Be it your ambition, then, to cultivate that happy temper, in which, though the outward man may decay, the inward man is daily renewed and strengthened. Be your journeying towards that city, where the inhabitant shall not any more say, "I am sick."

"Soul, take thine ease," is a feeling often indulged by the young, in the expectation of long life. But how vain the confidence, from a being who is compared to a morning "flower, which in the evening is cut down and withered!" Whose longest life is called but a span, a vision, a tale that is told! But if, my child, the fabrick of your happiness is composed of such frail and perishable materials, as friends, or health, or length of days, or of any temporal enjoyments you may now possess, or yet hope to obtain; you may gaze indeed, on the structure, and be ready to exclaim, as some did on a very different occasion, "What manner of stones, and what buildings are here!" But you may also hear the voice of wisdom reply to such vain boastings, "Verily there is not one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Yet there are things of which you might make this boast with propriety; and might even exclaim, "Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up

for many years. Need I say, they are bags which wax not old; treasures, which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and laid up where thieves cannot break through and steal; even durable riches, and righteousness; the pearl of great price, deposited in a city that hath foundations, in a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Your food, the heavenly manna, "bread which the world knows not of;" your raiment, the white and spotless robe of the Redeemer's righteousness. With these treasures in prospect, though your frail body should be bending under sickness and adversity, you may yet "be full, and abound;" you may eat, drink, and be merry. Or, if favoured with prosperity, you are authorized to enjoy the bounties of Providence, for a blessing is upon your basket and your store. Who, then, would not seek *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and leave all inferior things to be bestowed by Him, who will give or withhold according as our eternal interests may be best promoted? Who would not covet to have goods laid up thus for many years; goods for this life, and for that which is to come; treasures as inexhaustible as eternity itself? While the thoughtless worldling is rejoicing in his youth, and walking in the sight of his eyes, regardless of the aw-

ful threatening, that God will, for all these things, bring him to judgment; the Christian may anticipate that day with confidence and joy, as the time when he will be put in full possession of his inheritance, and when he may securely say, in the language of holy triumph, "Soul, take thine ease; thou hast goods laid up, not now for many years merely, but for the countless ages of a never-ending eternity."

No. VII.

"A great multitude, which no man could number."
REV. chap. vii. ver. 9.

WHILE these words make the Christian's heart exult, at the multitudes who will partake of the heavenly blessedness, rivers of waters run from his eyes, when he considers how few they are, compared with that company, who, by the broad road, and through the wide gate, are daily passing to destruction. Such reflections would dishearten the young pilgrim, but for the assurance that there is a Divine Power engaged to defend and protect him, amidst all obstacles and dangers, and eventually to conduct him safely to the heavenly kingdom.

Nothing less than infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, extending to the various circumstances of every individual, could have peopled heaven with such a numerous throng, when the descent to destruction is so uninterrupted and easy, and the impediments that obstruct the way to eternal life are so formidable and so numerous.

In this mutable world, the avocations and pursuits of the swarms who inhabit it, are almost as various as their faces; and of many who are apparently pursuing the same end, perhaps a very small proportion is actuated precisely by the same motive. Different ages, education, and dispositions, produce an almost infinite variety in the internal principle, while the external conduct, to a superficial observer, may appear to be the same. But in the world above, our noble employment, the result of one individual principle actuates all its inhabitants; all, with one accord, cast their crowns at the feet of Him, who "loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood:" all unite in one harmonious song, and ascribe "glory and honour, dominion and power, to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever."

But of this numerous, and now harmonious company, how many are there, my dear ***, who are summoned from this lower world at your period of life! And do they regret the exchange? Have they not found, that "to depart and be with Christ is far better?" But how obtained they admittance into the heavenly city? They were weak as you are; were ignorant and helpless as you are; assailed by the vanities and bau-

bles, that tempt and captivate you. But say not, my child, "I shall one day fall by the hand of these temptations;" for behold an innumerable company of such as you are, who, following this Captain of their salvation, "fought the good fight, and finished their course," and have had their young heads adorned with the laurel of victory, with a crown of never-fading glory.

Many, too, there are, who were called amid the hurry and bustle of an active life; who, to the eye of sense, could ill be spared from their families and dependants; but such, however "cumbered with much serving" here below, had obtained the rare art of being, while "diligent in business, fervent in sprit, serving the Lord." How such would exult, though they left their earthly work unfinished, to find themselves so soon in the possession of the heavenly rest."

Of this innumerable company, there are also many, who sojourned a long time below. Years had passed over their heads, diversified by all the vicissitudes to which human life is exposed; but what an insignificant speck is such a period, with all the events that made it interesting, compared with an eternity begun! How light are the afflictions under which they were ready to sink, and the duration of them how momentary, in their

present estimation! Many had been groaning for years under the decays of their mortal nature. Now, all pains and infirmities are done away, and exchanged for unfailing life, and health, and vigour. "They shall no more say, I am sick, for the people that dwell there are forgiven their iniquities."

How many of this innumerable company were once the poor and despised of this world; who, while accounted "the scum and offscouring of all things," were "rich in grace;" who, while they were in want of daily bread, had food for their souls, which the world never tasted! and enjoyed many a delicious repast, which was but a foretaste of the banquet to which we have now sat down!

And though it is difficult for a rich man, who is surrounded with earthly pleasures, to enter the kingdom of God, yet, to the glory of divine grace, there are many rich and noble there, who, having first sought "the kingdom of God and his righteousness," had "all other things added to them." These used the world as not abusing it; and these are they to whom it will be said, in an especial manner, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hunger-

ed, and ye gave me food; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was naked, and ye clothed me; sick, and in prison, and ye came unto me: enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

How great, then, will be the condemnation, how terrible the self accusations, of those, who, at last, shall find themselves shut out by an impassable gulf, from this holy multitude; which, notwithstanding every hindrance and obstacle, has gained admittance, through the gates, into the city!" What prevented them from joining the happy number? Did persecution, or affliction, or distress, or famine, or sword, or nakedness? Behold, these blessed spirits are they "who came out of great tribulation," and whom neither prosperity nor adversity could separate from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Will any plead poverty, that they were so occupied in providing for their daily wants, as to have no leisure to attend to their immortal interests? the anthems of those who were once as poor, will put them to silence: or will any plead the deceitfulness of riches, as that which destroyed them? there is a wealthy Abraham, a porsperous Jacob; who, though he passed over Jordan with his staff only, in a few years became two bands. There is king David, the man after God's own heart,

and many of his posterity, who succeeded him on the throne of Judah. There is Joseph of Arimathea, the rich man, who performed the last offices for his Saviour. There are the elect lady, and her children, to whom John wrote, and multitudes more, who prove that riches are not an insurmountable obstacle to entering the kingdom of God. What circumstances, then, can hinder my dear child from following them, "who through faith and patience inherit the promises?" In her "Father's house there are many mansions; bread enough, and to spare: though the guests are numerous, yet there is room." Behold your parents, in conjunction with the ministers of the Gospel, sent to compel you to come in. Say not, "I pray thee have me excused." Are you weak? Behold one who "carries the lambs in his bosom." Are you worthless? "He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." Are you tempted by a gay and alluring world? He has promised to succour those who are tempted. What circumstances of difficulty can my child be in, from which He cannot find a way for her to escape? Behold yon innumerable company, and reflect on the virtue and efficacy of the Redeemer's blood, which was able to satisfy for the sins of every individual, though more in number

than the hairs of his head; and then exclaim, "O the unsearchable riches of Christ!" He has brought many sons and daughters to glory, and he now waits to be gracious to you; that, notwithstanding your discouragements, he may present you, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, before his Father, with that great company, "which no man can number."

No. VIII.

"Thy servant went no whither."
2 Kings, chap. v. ver. 25.

It is a great encouragement to the Christian, in the cultivation of his graces, to know, that while he is building up one grace, he is laying the foundation for another. Thus the Apostle informs us, that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. So does one divine qualification spring from another, till the whole man is complete, and attains "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." But it is equally true, that sinful propensities operate in a similar manner; and so depraved is the heart of man, that a solitary vice is not to be found in it. The vile prevarication of Cain, of—"I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" originated in murder. When Rebekah and Jacob united to obtain the blessing by craft and guile, she was influenced by an unjustifiable partiality; he, by a want of due confidence in Divine Providence. The foolish and

false excuse made by Aaron, when Israel was detected dancing round the golden calf, was the offspring of idolatry. The lies of Ananias and Sapphira were dictated by covetousness; and this was the vice which occasioned Gehazi to say, "thy servant went no whither." The love of gain was the base principle in his heart; for which he became the living monument of the just vengeance of God, and carried the marks of his sin to the grave. But those who imagine that their tongues alone can be the instruments of falsehood, are greatly mistaken. He that attempts to produce an erroneous idea in the mind of another, is a liar, whatever means he may employ: for, as to lie is to deceive; so, to deceive is to lie, be the deception practised in any form it may.

If this is true, then by what name must we call that person, who is making an expensive and ostentatious display in the world, to which his pecuniary resources are inadequate? Does he not in effect say, "I am rich;" while in reality he is poor? To what calamities do not falsehoods like these expose those who practise them? To what injuries, those who are connected with them?

But the hour of temptation is not yet arrived, when you, my dear child, may be in danger of falling into this, so prevalent, error. Females of your age practise falsehoods, by different means, from different motives; but which, nevertheless, are sufficiently important in their consequences, as well as bad in the principle from which they proceed, to authorize an earnest expostulation. I allude to the disgusting affectations which many of your age and sex begin to indulge; to the pains they take to appear what they are not; affecting lisps, and simpers, and airs, till they become a strange compound of the ridiculous and unnatural; unlike every thing that is simple and pleasing, and resembling the disgusting picture drawn by the prophet Isaiah, of those damsels in his time, who went "mincing with their feet," and whose manners were deemed sufficiently reprehensible, to incur the censure of divine inspiration. Such, though not punished with a leprosy white as snow, may attain manners quite as disgusting; and, if not early subdued, as permanent and incurable.

As there are ways so many and so various in which truth may be violated, I am anxious, my child, to guard you against them; and while I discourse on the subject, I beseech you not to

say, as Pilate did, "What is truth?" and then rise up and go your way, without waiting for a reply. The falsehoods that are practised in the world, by attempting to appear otherwise than we are, would form too large a catalogue for me here to enumerate; yet I should leave the most important part of my work undone, were I not to advert to that deceit, which we are all too apt to practise upon our own souls, while we cry "peace, when there is no peace," and content ourselves with the outward "form of godliness, without the power." We have a name to live among men; our fellow-creatures, and even ourselves, we may deceive; but God, who searcheth the heart, we cannot deceive: He is the God of Truth; and truth he desireth in the inward parts. Of what avail is it, then, that we carry a lie in our right hand? Rather let us approve ourselves to his all-seeing eye, by practising truth universally, in our dealings both with God and man.

Guile, deceit, prevarication, whether in word or deed, can only proceed from want of rectitude in our conduct: for that which is obtained honestly, which is possessed prudently, which is not disreputable, or unseemly, need not be concealed. The dagger it is which is carried under the

cloak. There would be little whispering if there were less mischief. If you intend no ill to any one, it is of little consequence, in general, who knows what you intend. Cultivate, then, a frank and open temper, which is a much better pledge of genuine integrity than is an air of mystery and reserve:—and while you make a solemn appeal to the great Searcher of hearts to see what evil there is in you, shrink not from making a similar appeal to your fellow-creatures, and let them also search you, and try you, if they please. It was a memorable encomium which our Lord passed upon Nathanael, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" And where does the sacred volume exhibit a more engaging character? What greater honour could be bestowed on mortal man, than to be so judged by Him, who alone is competent to discover genuine sincerity? Let it be your ambition, my child, to imitate so illustrious an example, that when interrogated, you may have a ready answer to give. If you have never injured your fellow-creature, by word or deed; if you have never "shot an arrow at him, even bitter words;" but, on the contrary, have habitually sought his good, should the question be put to you, "Where is thy brother?" you will have no occasion to re-

ply, 'I know not; am I my brother's keeper?' If you have a firm faith and reliance on Divine Providence, you will not stand in need of mean contrivances, and low subterfuges, to obtain any earthly good. The hand that is occupied in dressing a savoury morsel for a sick and infirm parent, is laudably employed; provided it is not with intent to supplant a brother, and obtain his birthright: and it is only while you have no idol in your house and in your heart, that you can have no occasion for the vain excuses of idolatrous Israel. While you have recourse to no unjustifiable means to keep what you have, or to obtain what you have not, you need not equivocate with Gehazi, nor lie with Ananias and Sapphira.

And remember, whatever propensity you may now feel to appear in disguise, and to seem what you are not, the day is approaching when you must appear as you are, in the view of men and angels; and what is of far greater consequence, when you shall be revealed to *yourself!* If to yourself you should remain during your life a stranger, you will then appear in all your native deformity: and oh! how appalling, how humiliating will be the view! But I would hope better things of you, my child, and that you are includ-

ed in tle happy number who are Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile.

Be *Truth*, then, my dear child, your continual object. Lovely, amiable, undisguised Truth, reaching to the inward parts, and pervading the whole of your character. Let it be your daily study and delight; otherwise, when the time of your departure is at hand, and you are about to render an account of the deeds done in your body, how will you, with any well grounded confidence, be able to say, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord! thou God of TRUTH?"

No. IX.

"And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father."

2 Sam. chap. xvii. ver. 23.

There cannot be a greater satire upon human wisdom, than this story. The subject of it, we are informed, had such a reputation for wisdom, that to consult him, was as if a man inquired of the oracle of God. He possessed that depth of penetration, that clear foresight, which enabled him to pronounce upon the issue of events, with a confidence that would have branded a common understanding with temerity and presumption. He was, therefore, naturally held in high estimation among his friends; and possibly his superior sagacity was not underrated by himself. Nevertheless, while we render a just tribute of praise to wisdom so profound as his, we mourn over the self-conceited Ahithophels, whom we see every day: from whose advice, opinions and de-

cisions, no appeal must be made. Such characters as these are the last to receive what they so imperiously force upon others. Happy is it for the world that the character is not universal: if it were, if such a thing as an humble and yielding temper were no where to be found, peace would be banished from the earth. In that case, we should have no occasion to look to hostile armies for scenes of contention and warfare; but every neighbourhood, every house, would be in tumult, with wars, and fightings, and domestic broils.—Happy is it, I say, for the peace of society, that there are some among us who prefer peace to their own opinions; and thereby exhibit more real wisdom than Ahithophel, with all his boasted sagacity. Of him it may be suspected, without breach of charity, that the awful course he took was the result of wounded pride, rather than of zeal in the cause of his friend.

It is certain that Ahithophel, the sagacious Ahithophel, was in reality a fool; for the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God;" and if he had possessed a thorough belief in the existence of such a Being, he would not have rushed into his presence with hands stained with his own blood. He was a fool, as he was incapable of weighing a temporary mortification, the slight of a fellow-

mortal, and the failure of a favourite scheme, against the reproaches of his own conscience, and the wrath of Him who had given him life; and whom he rebelled against by throwing it away. Such was Ahithophel; and from reviewing his character we may form some estimation of human wisdom, and learn to covet that wisdom which is from above, and which will guide us safely through this life, as well as conduct us certainly to that which is to come.

But I am not apprehensive, my dear child, that your fellow-creatures will ever place you in the situation of Ahithophel, by an application to your wisdom, as the oracle by which they are to conduct their affairs; though it is not impossible but, in your small sphere, you may be called upon for counsel and advice: not because of your superior sagacity, but because in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. In that case you will do well to keep self-love out of the question, and deliver your opinion with modesty, humility and submission; allowing those who consult you, to think and act for themselves, after all, and to select from your advice such portions as their own wisdom may suggest. Indeed, I know of no dispositions which stand more in need of the golden rule than the obsti-

nate and overbearing. Surely none are so well qualified to appreciate the feelings of others, when opposed, as they who themselves cannot endure opposition. Such should reflect, that they cannot be *always* right, any more than others can be *always* wrong; and that, by never yielding, they, in effect, assume infallibility.

Yet there are subjects on which we may advance and maintain an opinion, without the apprehension of a mistake: where we may bestow counsel, and grieve if it is rejected: not because a slight is implied upon ourselves, but on account of the inevitable consequences of neglecting it, to those to whom it is given. There are occasions upon which we are authorized to be firm and unyielding; opinions which we are enjoined to maintain, though opposed by all around us.—You will perceive that these can only be of a spiritual nature, and of eternal concernment.

But even here our zeal should be according to knowledge, with all wisdom, meekness, and gentleness; taking care to avoid the mistake of those, who imagine that they may be guilty of any violence, if they have but the sanction of religion to their cause. Yet, if it fall to our lot, and become our bounden duty, to warn some impenitent sinner of his danger, we must address

him with uncertainty and hesitation, keeping pace with his languid notions about matters of eternal interest; we must not tell him, that to continue in sin may *possibly* involve him in destruction: we may affirm confidently, that "the wages of sin *is* death." We must not be content with hinting, that God is sometimes displeased with him; but we are authorized to assert, that he is angry with the wicked *every* day: nor may we flatter him that the good things he may possess are any distinguishing tokens of his Creator's favour; on the contrary, we are sure that the curse of God is in the house of the wicked, however full his barns, and rich his coffers.

If, on the other hand, we should behold some poor trembling sinner inquiring the way to Zion, with his face thitherward, we need not feel dubious how to direct him; should we see him knocking at Mercy's door, we shall not stipulate him to perseverance by the faint hope that *perhaps* it may be opened; that if he ask, he *may* receive; and that if he seek, he *may* possibly find; but we may assure him, that "whosoever cometh shall in no wise be cast out."

And remember, for your own consolation, my dear child, that however dark and uncertain your

path may be, through this intricate wilderness, yet, if you follow your guide, if you adhere to your rule, you cannot mistake your road : the directions are plain, that "he may run who readeth : the way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." You may frequently be at a loss in matters of temporal concernment; your affairs may be so complicated as to baffle your own wisdom and that of your friends; and many a lesson you may learn from dear-bought experience, which will more effectually convince you of your weakness and fallibility, than all the sage warnings you are now accustomed to hear; but what a consolation is it to reflect, that those things which are of the highest importance, of eternal moment, are those upon which you may act with the greatest certainty; because the word of Him who cannot lie, is your rule and guide.

Notwithstanding the most promising appearances of temporal projects, we may find, sometimes, that we have been building on the sand; but if our eternal hopes have the word of God for their foundation, the rain may descend, and the wind may blow, in vain; we are built on the Rock of Ages. And those, too, whose intellectual powers are of the lowest order, may take

encouragement from the consideration, that God hath chosen "the foolish things of this world to confound the wise;" revealing unto babes that genuine wisdom, which teaches us to set our affections on things above, and not on things below.

No. X.

"The labour of the olive shall fail."
HABAKKUK, chap. iii. ver. 17.

IT exhibits an eminent instance of the prophet's faith, of his indifference to worldly prosperity, and of his heavenly mindedness, that after realizing such a variety of temporal calamities, he could exultingly exclaim, 'Nevertheless, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' Happy are they, in a mutable world like this, who in expectation of any, or all of these calamities, can adopt similar language; and in the want of all things, thus know how to abound.

Such deprivations are best appreciated by those, who have previously been accustomed to the *luxuries* of life: severe, indeed, is the trial, if then the fig tree fail to blossom, and there be no fruit in the vine. But even this would be more tolerable than to be deprived of its *comforts*, by the flocks being cut off from the fold, and the herd from the stalls: and if, to aggravate the calamity, its *necessaries* were to be

withheld; if the fields should yield no meat, then some might be ready to imagine that no addition could be made to their misery. Such, doubtless, would be the sentiments of the worldling, whose chief solicitude is about what he shall eat, and what he shall drink, and wherewithal he shall be clothed. But there are deeper woes than these. When the divine penman mentioned the much laboured olive, he classed it with the vine and the fig-tree; and attached no other than the literal meaning to the term: but as our children are compared by the sweet singer of Israel to *olive branches* round about our table, I shall cull this plant for my present purpose, and use it as an emblem of those more precious plants, so dear to a parent's heart.

It is a parent only who can know the watching, the weariness, the nights of sleeplessness, and days of care, which are inseparable from the rearing of a family, and which their bodily welfare requires: should we find that our utmost care and diligence can raise only a puny and feeble constitution, how great is the disappointment! And if, after all, we have but been fostering the object of our hopes for a premature grave, then is it that faith is tried, and that it triumphs glo-

riously, if enabled to exclaim, 'I will yet rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation!'

Yet are there those who can affirm, by sad experience, that deeper wounds may be inflicted than by the dart of death. They who have lived to see all their schemes abortive, and those plans frustrated, which they had most discreetly laid for the prosperity of their family: frustrated, perhaps, by unavoidable misfortune; or worse still, if by imprudence thus annihilating their sanguine hopes, and most pleasing speculations; and even rendering those who should have been the stay and support of their declining years, a weight and incumbrance, at a season, too, when the grasshopper is a burden. At how many points may the heart of a parent be wounded! And where is it that he is not vulnerable? For, should none of these evils ever befall him, there are others, which have brought the gray hairs of many in sorrow to the grave.

With a healthy and prosperous offspring, it is possible for parents to be deprived of all the happiness they have so hardly earned, and dearly bought, by the ungrateful and undutiful carriage of their children towards them: withholding from them that respect and attention, to which their long and faithful services entitle them, wearying

them by peevishness, disturbing them by passion, setting their authority at nought by obstinacy and self-will; and doing all in their power to confirm them in the truth of that divine warning, (of which they need no confirmation) that here is not their rest. The enormity of such conduct can best be estimated by the forcible and repeated injunctions in scripture, to the performance of filial duties, and the heavy woes there denounced upon a failure in them. Arguing from these commands and threatenings, we are warranted to number such a failure of the much *laboured olive*, among the most poignant of human woes; because it is conduct which marks the character base, and suppresses any present hope of its being influenced by religious principles. What! my *child!* a precious part of myself, a stranger to religion! Ah! what is a body, unsightly, deformed, and emaciated by disease, to that state of the soul, which is represented as full of wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores! where the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint? What is it to consign the mortal part of a dear child to the grave, compared with the sad conviction, that one so precious is dead in trespasses and sins! Could I look into the tomb, and behold the skeleton, stripped of that dear clothing, which I once

used to contemplate with so much delight, ought I to feel a pang equal to that arising from the perishing condition of the immortal soul, where no symptoms of animation appear to invigorate my hopes, to gladden my heart? 'Can these dry bones live?' would be the language of every sigh. 'O Lord! thou knowest' the only support of every languid hope.

My dear ***, your father and I have, to the best of our abilities, endeavoured to promote the prosperity of our children, with regard to this world, by early inuring them to habits of activity, and thereby securing them an independence beyond the power of riches to bestow; and yet, notwithstanding all our care and labour, and all yours, there may be no fruit in your vine, no herd in your stall, no meat in your fields. In that case, by bringing you up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, we have, in some measure, prepared you to combat such evils, and taught you to 'set your affections on things above;' where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal: and though our sorrows would be great to see, after all our solicitude, any of our dear family in indigent circumstances, yet how greatly would it be alleviated by the consideration, if permitted to indulge it, that though disappointed in our

worldly schemes, we had been instrumental in the salvation of their souls. If planted in the house of the Lord, and flourishing in the courts of their God, we should have abundant consolation, though their bodies were to languish and decay, and their outward circumstances to fail.

Nevertheless, see, my dear child, (as I before observed) how very vulnerable is a parent's heart. From many wounds you cannot defend it, by your utmost vigilance, because you cannot defend yourself; but, in various respects, your father's and your mother's happiness is at your disposal; and there is no more effectual method of ensuring it, than by setting immediately about the work of religion: this will give them the best security for your temporal prosperity, (at least so much of it as is really good for you) for godliness hath the promise of this life, as well as of that which is to come. And this will be the best and surest pledge for your fulfilling the duties of life, not only to your parents, but to society around you. With divers afflictions have your parents been visited: we have seen, at times, our vine and our fig-tree blighted; but if our *olives*, our much laboured *olives*, should yield their increase, 'then, indeed, will we joy in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of our salvation.'

me take occasion to make some remarks, my ***, on the different sensations of children, during such mournful seasons. By some, the return that was due to affectionate parents for their incessant care, has never been made till the moment of separation; and then, many an arrow which they had shot, perhaps thoughtlessly, at a parent's heart, rebounds again, and pierces their own with a yet deeper wound. As for me, grief, deep, genuine grief, the result of the sincerest affection, was the only sensation that ever annoyed me at the dying bed of either parent; nor could memory inflict one pang, when the daughter, of forty-two years old, closed the eyes of her dying mother. This is a consolation which many would give all their treasures to purchase.

What do I not owe to Him, who has so faithfully fulfilled his promise, that 'When thy father and thy mother forsake thee, then the Lord shall take thee up!' He has made goodness and mercy to follow me all my days, and supplied the place of one dear relative by the gift of himself as another: I may still exclaim, 'My Father, thou hast been the guide of my youth,' the supply of my maturer age, and the support of my declining years. And when I tell you, my dear child, that I can trace back, from event to event,

like the links in a chain, some of the choice blessings I now enjoy, to the death of this dear parent, you will learn to trust in that Providence, which can bring good out of evil; though years may elapse before the joyful issue shall appear.

Let us, then, turn from the creature, the frail creature, whom if the wind passeth over it, is gone; and contemplate the God of providence, and the God of grace. Let me lead you, my child, from the sepulchre of your mortal ancestor, to that of your dear Redeemer: 'Come, see the place where your Lord lay.' He entered that gloomy abode for such as you and I; and thereby afforded a proof of stronger affection than ever existed in the hearts of your parents, or of mine; while for our sakes they desire to live, He, for our salvation, was willing to die. Lo! he is not here; he is risen, and now superintends all events, and makes each individual of his people his peculiar care. Fear not, then, my child; for though father and mother should forsake you, your Redeemer liveth.—*Your* Redeemer! May I say it? What! Are you really a subject of his grace? or are you only a partaker of the common bounties of his providence? This is an important question; examine yourself, therefore, and see whether Christ be truly formed in you

or not. If he is, you may go in peace, for no real evil shall befall you: though he may, perhaps, deal with you as my father did by me; he may visit your iniquities with the rod, and your transgressions with stripes; nevertheless, his loving kindness he will not remove, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. Yes, my father was a strict disciplinarian; insomuch that his zeal for my welfare, sometimes, I believe, exceeded his prudence. Not so our heavenly Father: he knoweth that we are but dust; he corrects in measure, and always remembers mercy in the midst of judgment. To him you can look at all times, and say with unbounded confidence, 'My Father, thou art the guide of my youth.'

I was once summoned home by my father from the house of a near relative, where I had for a long time been too much indulged. This was a painful stroke, and almost broke my heart: but he thereby only imitated the conduct of our heavenly Parent, who sometimes, when nothing else will do it, separates us from the world, by some afflictive dispensation, and brings us out from the midst of it, that we may be his sons and his daughters; thereby giving us occasion still to say, 'My Father, thou art the guide of my youth; thou art the guide of my maturer years.'

Again, my father once destroyed a favourite toy, about which he thought I was too much occupied. Oh! the pangs I felt when this gay bauble was consuming in the flames! The time may come, my child, when your heavenly Father may seize some bauble of yours, the idol of your heart, dear as the apple of your eye: but as he does not willingly afflict the children of his people, do not oblige him to it by an inordinate attachment to worldly objects. If such, however, should be your case, do not harbour rebellious thoughts, as I did, but pray that you may quietly submit, and say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.' To the justness of his discipline I can bear testimony; He has deprived me of many things which I have thought good, and given me many more that I have thought evil: but by such painful dispensations, he has proved, as much as by his daily and unmerited mercies, that he has been 'my Father, and the guide of my youth.'

Finally, by the premature death of my parent, I was deprived of an earthly portion: but should I, with an holy confidence, be enabled to say, 'Thou art my portion,' the heavenly Canaan will be my inheritance. What cause have I

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then for regret? Nay, can I do better, my dear child, than commend you to Him, whose mercy continueth from generation to generation, and his faithfulness to children's children? Praise ye the Lord.

No. XII.

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these."

MATTHEW, chap. vi. ver. 29.

OUR Lord, by these words, intended to inculcate the duty and the benefit of an implicit reliance on Divine Providence; and to reprove the folly and the uselessness of an inordinate anxiety about temporal concerns. But with you, my dear child, the period has not yet arrived when such counsel would be necessary; it devolves on others, at present, to care and to provide for you: a privilege which you will be best qualified to appreciate, when they have surrendered their office into your own hands, and when your turn arrives for performing the same duty towards others. But, in your present circumstances, our Lord's exhortation would be premature, and would be forgotten, long before it could be called into use. I shall, therefore, apply this portion of Scripture to a different purpose; namely,

to noticing the estimation in which the Creator of all things holds human glory, what value he sets upon things which the young, especially, are too apt to make the chief objects of their pursuit.

'Behold the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these!' We are told of the ivory steps by which he ascended his throne; of his palaces of cedar; of the luxuries of his table; of riches in such abundance, that silver was nothing accounted of in his days; of his traffick and merchandize; insomuch that the queen of Sheba (probably as much dazzled by his regal splendour, as by his unprecedented wisdom) had no might left in her! Such was the magnificence of Solomon; yet, humbling consideration, 'when at the summit of all earthly glory, he was surpassed by the lily of the field.'

From this you may infer, my child, the extreme folly and vanity of an inordinate desire for worldly riches, honours, and distinctions. When you have attained all you can hope, or even wish to attain, what will you still be in the estimation of true wisdom? You must pursue different objects, before He, whose favour is better than life, will regard you with an eye of com-

placency; for 'the Lord hath respect unto the lowly, while the proud he knoweth afar off;' and to such only will he look who are of an humble and contrite spirit. To obtain his favour, you must 'learn of Him, who is meek and lowly in heart; for he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.'

Learn, also, how the choicest of earthly blessings may degenerate into curses, by a loose and careless walk and conduct. Solomon had all his prosperity bestowed upon him in consequence of his pious choice, his judicious preference of wisdom: but evil communications, as is their natural tendency, turned away his heart, whereby he bequeathed us one lesson, as forcible as any that is contained in his wise and pious writings, that riches and honours are blessings or curses, according to the character by which they are possessed. Solomon on his throne, a great and good prince, was a glorious spectacle; and the prosperity showered down upon him and his people, was a real blessing: but when his heart was turned away; when the man was changed, so were all his possessions; for the sinner is 'cursed in his basket and in his store.' Not so the spiritual blessings, which are the peculiar portion of the godly. They may be forfeited for a season; but

blessings they will always remain. A table spread with the bread of life will never become a snare.

How great, then, is the difference between the common favours of Providence, and the riches of divine grace! Solomon in all his glory was beneath the lily of the field; the Christian, the humble Christian, is infinitely above both it and him: for our blessed Lord thus argues: 'If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe the children of his love?

The Christian, therefore, passing unobserved through the vale of life, is richer, is more noble, has better provision, than a backsliding Solomon, though upon a throne. The Christian, using all lawful means to procure his daily bread, yet humbly depending on his heavenly Father for it, and thankful for the homeliest morsel, having bread to eat which the world knows not of; the Christian, patient under trials, walking closely with his God in private, and in the ordinances of his house; maintaining a warfare with sin and Satan; setting his affections on things above; rejoicing in hope, and longing for glory; however humble his lot, however obscure his station, is, in reality, the most dignified character on earth.

The lily of the field, the monarch on the throne, he views alike with holy indifference; except, that from the former he gleans a lesson of humility, but from the latter he turns his eyes, having a more glorious throne, a brighter crown in prospect. And if the utmost splendour of earthly magnificence is yet surpassed by the lily of the field, with how much more propriety may we exclaim, when contemplating such illustrious characters, 'Verily, Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these!'

No. XIII.

"And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down, in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties."

MARK, chap. xxxix. ver. 40.

WHEN the weary and famished multitude thus complied with the Saviour's arrangement, though it is probable they were in expectation of some miracle, yet they were strangers to the nature and extent of it; they, however, did well in their compliance with the divine command, and thereby furnished an example to their successors in every age, who, in circumstances far more difficult and distressing than a temporary want of food, will find it to be their wisdom, and their interest, implicitly to obey the commands of Him, who is ever ready to say to those who seek direction, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.'

Many are the distresses and difficulties of his people, in all ages and circumstances; therefore think it not strange, my dear child, 'concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you;' but it

would be unnecessary for me to anticipate trouble, and alarm your fears, were it not in my power to direct you to a place of defence, where you may take refuge till these calamities be overpast. God is represented as 'a refuge from the wind, a covert from the storm;' and 'as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land;' that God, who led Israel like a flock through the wilderness forty years, who supplied their daily necessities, who defended them from surrounding enemies, and who finally put them in possession of the promised land. It is true they were a stiff necked and rebellious house; yet they so far complied with the divine will as to follow the cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, though they knew not whither it would lead them. And thus, my child, must you follow the directions of Providence, in all circumstances of your life, though you may not foresee what are its designs respecting you. Of many of them you will probably be unable to perceive the meaning, or to discover any connexion between them and your ultimate prosperity; any more than they who were commanded to sit down by fifties on the grass, could expect that they should all eat and be filled, from the distribution of five barley loaves, and two small fishes.

But if such compliance is necessary, with respect to our temporal concerns, of how much more consequence is it that we conform to the doctrines and commands of the gospel? God has manifested a way in which alone He will save sinners; expect not, hope not for salvation in any other way; for 'there is no other name given under heaven, among men, than that of Jesus.' He is the bread of life; His are the waters of salvation; the feast provided for perishing souls. Partake of these, and you shall never hunger, never thirst; reject them, and you famish. Put yourself in a posture to receive the divine sustenance, such a posture as the gospel requires, and lo! your heavenly Father stands ready to dispense celestial provision, and abundantly to supply all your spiritual wants.

They were commanded to sit down by fifties: a pleasing resemblance of the select societies into which the church on earth is divided: and a glorious spectacle it is to see, here and there, in this barren wilderness, a little company, sitting down, in compliance with the divine command, and waiting for the bread of life. They are one multitude, having one object in view; and they all look to the same liberal benefactor for the supply of their numerous wants. Surely such

consideration might extirpate every root of bitterness, blunt every acrimonious sensation, subdue every party spirit, and render their love universal, such as they know it will be, when they assemble to eat bread in their Father's kingdom.

Shall I now, my dear child, descend to meaner things; and from your heavenly Father, the source of all your enjoyments, call your attention to your earthly parents? Did our Lord, when about to feed his family, command them to sit down by fifties? And did they obey, without murmuring at, or resisting his arrangements? And may not the heads of every family say to their's, 'Do you likewise?' Many of the plans and regulations which they are constrained to adopt, may appear strange and unintelligible to the young and inexperienced! yet they are not obliged (nay they are sometimes unable) to give them an account of any of their matters; but those who wish to be fed, will find it their interest, as well as their duty, to acquiesce. Continue as you have done hitherto, my dear child, to sit down quietly, depending on our wisdom and parental care: and though we cannot perform a miracle in your behalf, yet, in the use of all lawful means, and with a dependence on Divine

Providence, we may not only supply your present wants, but gather up some fragments for your future use.

Finally, let us all contemplate, with love and gratitude, the Father of this numerous family, whose tender mercies are over all his works; who satisfies the desire of every living thing; and who, while he so bountifully provides food for the returning wants of these perishing bodies, has a rich banquet in store, for the dear children of his love, even heavenly bread, and fountains of living waters.

No. XIV.

"Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house, lest he be weary of thee, and hate thee."

PROVERBS, chap. xxv. ver. 17.

THE young, who especially stand in need of this admonition, will probably exclaim, 'It is a hard saying, who can hear it?' The ardour and inexperience of youth make them ready to imagine that they can never be weary of what they love; but the wisest of men thought otherwise; and it is observable, that the term employed extends, in its scriptural use, beyond our common acquaintance, to the individual whom we distinguish by a peculiar affection, and on whom we bestow one of the dearest of all mortal names, that of a *friend*.

And do you think, my dear child, there are no seasons when the most intimate and confidential friend might be an intruder? I hesitate not to say, whatever consolations I may have derived, in seasons of affliction and distress, from the kind offices of friendship, that there are times, when, to be left alone, is more congenial with

the feelings: and in so saying, I believe I speak the language of many others in similar circumstances; of Job's three friends, at least, who sat down seven days without breaking silence. Not that we should refuse to give or to receive the consolation of a friend in affliction; yet, without any derogation from that tender title, the mind may occasionally be in such a frame, as to be rather oppressed than relieved by the presence of any one; and, whenever this is perceived, a judicious friend will give the best proof of his affection, by retiring.

A *real* friend also may be an intruder during the hurry of business and daily avocations. On this part of the subject the young have much to learn. They have to learn that there is a proper season for every purpose under the sun; and then they will endeavour, as much as possible, to time their visits accordingly. In a well regulated establishment, every portion of the day has its allotted avocations; an ill-timed and protracted visit, therefore, will derange and throw the whole into confusion: nor is it to be forgotten, that the occurrence of unexpected circumstances in our family affairs, may sometimes disable us as much from enjoying the society of our dearest friends as of our common neighbours.

I am aware that I tread here upon delicate ground. That perfect friendship requires unlimited confidence, is a sentiment which the enthusiasm of youth is loth to relinquish : but believe it, my dear child, circumstances may exist, so foreign from the knowledge, so remote from the experience or situation of your intimate friend, as to render communication, not only unnecessary, but inconvenient and imprudent. You will not suspect me of being an advocate for cold caution, a selfish, suspicious, and reserved spirit; this which you know me to dislike and to disapprove; nor think that I undervalue a name, without which the world would almost be a desert. I would not damp that amiable openness and frankness of temper, which is not only the most likely to procure us friends, but also to retain them. On the contrary, as friendship is a plant which will flourish in heaven, I would cultivate it, in your young bosom, with the most assiduous care : but, the better to succeed, I would prune the superfluous branches, which, though wearing the appearance of health and luxuriance to a superficial observer, yet impede its growth, and ultimately produce decay.

Solomon supposed a case, in which one friend might not only grow weary of, but *hate* another;

and you would hardly credit the assertion, with less than Solomon's wisdom to confirm it; yet *I* venture to assure you, that such events do frequently occur; that many a fair friendship has been blighted by injudicious conduct; and that familiarity, which produces contempt, too often terminates in disgust.

You will easily credit this, if you reflect upon your sensations towards other pleasures. Which is there of all your enjoyments that would not weary you by perpetual recurrence? Fruits or flowers the most delightful, dress the most becoming, prospects the most grand or lovely; if always present, how do their charms diminish! Our delight in them grows faint, to apathy; or becomes perverted to disgust. What is there, then, my dear ***, in this imperfect state, from which we may expect uninterrupted enjoyment, pleasure that will not satiate? Not even our friends, the choicest of all temporal blessings, if we make an injudicious, an intemperate use of them.

But there is a friend who sticketh closer than a brother; one who is never weary, how often soever you knock at his door: on the contrary, the more frequent your applications, the more

welcome you will be. *He* is only *wearied* by our neglects. Keep *not* thy foot from *his* house, lest the sorest calamity befall you, that can be the portion of mortal creature, lest *He* grow weary of you, and hate you.

No. XV.

'A false balance is abomination to the Lord; but a just weight is his delight.'

PROVERBS, chap. 11, ver. 1.

'Yes,' you will say, 'and depraved as is my nature, and sinful as I feel myself to be, a just balance is also my delight: but as I am engaged in no sort of traffick or merchandize, this admonition cannot be applicable to me; for, were I disposed to dishonesty in my dealings with others, my present circumstances place me beyond the reach of such a temptation.'

But you will do well, my child, to inquire, whether every period and condition of human life might not employ the balances, in some respects, with advantage. In the conviction that they might, I place them in your hands, not doubting that, if you poise them fairly, you will, in common with all who do so, be an ultimate gainer.

And first, I would recommend you to take an impartial survey, on the one hand, of the various ties whereby you are connected with those around you, and of the various duties required of you,

according to their several relations; then inquire, at the close of each day, whether you have rendered to every one his due; and not his *due* merely, but good measure, shaken together, heaped up, and running over. This is the measure in which the Lord delights. He is not satisfied with that cold integrity, which will not suffer the scale to preponderate an hair's breadth on the side of our neighbour; but He requires the full exercise of every engaging virtue, so lovely in the possessor, as to shed a heavenly lustre on his character, so winning in their influence upon all within our sphere.

If, during these impartial self-examinations, your conscience should acquit you, it is well; nevertheless, even in this case, your self-complacency may be chastised by our Lord's interrogation, 'If ye love your friends only, what thank have ye. Do not even publicans and sinners the same?' This instructs you, my dear child, to give your enemies, should you have any, their due also; not according to the dictates of revenge, but agreeably to the spirit of the gospel. Its divine lessons will instruct you to take the balances in your hands, and weigh the provocations of your own conduct against the ill-will you have incurred; and should there happily be no

provocation to be found, you may yet lay your trespasses in the balance against that forbearance, which 'hath not dealt with you according to your sins, neither rewarded you according to your iniquities.' You will then be constrained to say, 'Forgive me my trespasses;' and may you be able to add, 'as I forgive them that trespass against me.'

But before you perform this work from worthy motives, and in an acceptable manner, your balances must be employed in matters of far greater importance, even in attaining a right knowledge of yourself, and of that God with whom you have to do; 'who taketh up the isles as a very little thing,' and to whom they are 'as the small dust of the balance.' When you duly 'consider the heavens, the work of his hands, the moon, and the stars, which he hath ordained,' you will be constrained to say, 'Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him; and the son of man, that thou visitest him?'

These humiliating comparisons will excite additional admiration and gratitude, for the redemption of such a world by his Son; and cause you to weigh the blessings of the gospel, comprehending a life of holiness here, and happiness hereafter, against a course of sin and future misery.

'I have set before you,' says your heavenly Father, 'life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that thou mayest live.' Thus you will go on to weigh time against eternity, the pleasures of sin, which endure but for a season, against the woes that never end; and these light afflictions, too, that are but for a moment, against that eternal weight of glory promised to all God's suffering children. You will then be willing to barter all your earthly possessions for the pearl of great price; weighing the meat that perisheth against that which endureth to eternal life; those treasures which moth and rust do corrupt, against those which can be injured by neither; and you will have made so just an estimate, as no longer to wonder at the conduct of those heroes, recorded in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, who sacrificed all things, and endured all sufferings for the joy that was set before them; nor at the choice of the Apostle, who counted all things but dung, that he might win Christ, and be found in him.

Thus, my dear child, must you keep the balances in your hands, if you wish to be a partaker of the same reward; and while you weigh your daily provocations, and even your best performances, in the service of your Creator, against the unwearied bounties of his Providence, and the

transcendant riches of his grace, you will exclaim, in the depth of self-abasement, 'I am less than the least of all thy mercies.' May you never be a thankless partaker of the former, from being, to the latter, an utter stranger! Should this be your unhappy case, (which a *mother* cannot bear for a moment to suppose) duty compels her to forewarn you of the hand-writing that will one day be exhibited against you, in characters awfully clear and legible, 'Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting!'

No. XVI.

"And he spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall."

1 KINGS, chap. iv. ver. 33.

WHEN the great Creator had erected this goodly structure for the residence of man, before he introduced his guest he provided it with all things, not only for his necessities, but for his enjoyment. So rich was the banquet, that on a survey of his six day's labour, wherein were created every plant bearing seed, and every tree yielding fruit, he pronounced them all very good. And though man, by his rebellion, has justly forfeited these blessings, they are, nevertheless, mercifully continued to him, and he yet partakes of his Creator's bounty, so eminently displayed in the profusion of the vegetable kingdom.

It is true, the prickly thorn, and the noxious weed, now intermix with our roses and lilies, our vines and fig-trees; but we cease to wonder, when we contemplate the soil from whence they spring, which is cursed for our sakes, and even

refuses to yield its increase, except to our continued labour, and the sweat of our brow. Come, then, my child, let us see what we may extract by our labour, from this now comparatively barren soil; let us try if we cannot, from the vegetable world, procure food for our minds, as well as sustenance for our bodies, and thereby convert temporal blessings into spiritual benefits.

Solomon, in his study of the vegetable kingdom, extended his inquiries 'from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall:' let us, as far as we are able, do likewise. The cedar of Lebanon is famous in sacred story for its beauty, majesty, and usefulness; but let us begin our meditations with a tree of more extensive fame, even the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The fruit of it poisoned our first parents; and its noxious qualities, far from diminishing in virulence, have mingled with the vital stream, through all succeeding generations, and are now raging, my child, in your veins. From this fatal tree the weapon was formed, with which the first murderer slew a brother! Nay, from this tree the very cross was hewn, on which was extended the Lord of glory. No day passes in which we do not experience its malignant effects,

both in sin and in suffering; no day passes in which we ought not to apply for a remedy.

And is there no balm in Gilead to heal our diseases? Yes, there is hope in Israel concerning this thing; and the Saviour is represented under various similitudes, of which the vegetable kingdom affords a large proportion. He is styled the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valley; he is also as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood; and the believer is represented as sitting under his shadow with great delight. The prosperous condition of the saints is well described, when it is asserted, that 'those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God,' or be like fruitful trees by the rivers of water; while the progressive growth of those divine graces, which are planted in them by the Holy Spirit, and which constitute the Christian character, is compared to a grain of mustard seed; which, though the smallest of all seeds, springs up and increases, till it becomes a large tree, so that the birds of the air lodge in its branches.

And how may such growth and increase be promoted by a survey of the vegetable world? The grass that withereth, and the flower that fadeth, are apt emblems of our frailty and mortal-

ity, and teach us the folly of a too fond attachment to the things of the present life. The fate of the fig-tree warns us against unfruitfulness; and the parable of the wheat and tares may stimulate us to self-examination, and to the important inquiry, whether we shall be gathered up into the garner with the former, or tied up in bundles with the latter to burn.

But how many are prevented from making these salutary inquiries, by reposing under the shade of some favourite gourd, some earthly enjoyment which a worm may destroy in a night! Such, of whatever kind may be their enjoyments, might learn a salutary lesson from the lilies of the field; which, though they neither toil nor spin, do, nevertheless, surpass Solomon in all his glory. The ambition of the true Christian will rather be to resemble the 'shock of corn full ripe,' waiting for the time of harvest; and his consolation, under trials and adversities, will be derived from that cordial promise, that 'he who goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.'

The lofty and majestic cedar was an appropriate subject for the contemplation of king Solomon, of whom it was no unfit emblem: yet he did

not confine his researches to plants of such stately growth; he condescended to notice also the 'hyssop that groweth on the wall;' thereby imitating a greater than Solomon, who, though 'the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,' does not 'despise the day of small things,' and is no respecter of persons, but who will 'reward every one according to his works, when the dead, both *small* and *great*, shall stand before him in judgment.'

There are many cases, my dear child, wherein you may follow the example of Solomon, and extract benefit from contemplating sometimes the cedar, and sometimes the hyssop. You will do well, for instance, to consider the years of your life that are past, and those which, according to the course of nature, are yet in prospect. The former appear to you a long period; for the future, five or six such portions of time at the most, and your race is run, your course is finished, and you fly away!

These are profitable considerations. With your mind thus occupied, you are comparatively contemplating the cedar of Lebanon: but would your thoughts descend to the hyssop that groweth on the wall? Then reflect on the months, the weeks, the days, the hours, the moments of

which such protracted periods are composed. O my child! despise not even the hyssop; undervalue not your precious *moments;* suffer not *one* to be wasted; it is too precious a portion of your small span of time. They who think moments of no value, squander their years in vanity and trifles.

I have reason to hope, at least, from the early advantages with which a gracious Providence has favoured you, that you will never have to deplore flagrant and scandalous sins, which, like the lofty cedar, seem to sweep the skies; yet you will not boast that your mountain stands strong, that you shall never be moved, while you recollect what illustrious characters have at times fallen; but if restraining, or, what is more, converting grace should prevent such foul stains in your life, yet every day will furnish you with occasion to bewail those sins of the heart, which no eye sees but his who searcheth the heart. They may appear to those around you, like the hyssop that groweth on the wall, but to yourself they will resemble the lofty cedar. At first, perhaps, like a plant of better growth, they may seem but as a grain of mustard seed; yet, if it is not rooted up, this will become a tall and spreading tree. Is it not so, when out of the heart proceed murders,

thefts, and every evil thing? O, then, despise not these minute, but prolific plants, which, if suffered to grow, will overrun the soil, and render the whole unfruitful!

Again, behold with respect and reverence those who are eminently good, and wise unto salvation. Such characters are fit objects of your veneration; although many of them bloom in the vale of life unregarded, because they are in possession of no external qualities to attract attention. Poor in this world, low in human attainments, they live and die without exciting any interest in the supercilious mind: but we will not trample these humble flowers under our feet. The time approaches when they will transcend the lofty cedar in glory and in beauty; when these obscure individuals shall be owned and honoured before men and angels. It will be profitable for you to habituate yourself to the contemplation of such humble characters, as it will place men and things in their proper point of view; and make you ambitious rather to be good than great.

It is not probable that your rank in life, your talents or attainments, should bear any resemblance to the cedar of Lebanon: yet, if you should enjoy the elevating privilege of a life of commun-

ion with God, the pledge and earnest of a future life of glory, you will have ample reason of contentment, though, in the estimation of your fellow mortals, you should never be ranked above 'the hyssop that groweth on the wall.'

No. XVII.

"The devil as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour."

1 PETER, chap. 5, ver. 8.

AT the period of my childhood, my dear ***, it was not the custom to blend amusement with instruction. Of the books with which I was supplied, few were capable of exciting the interest of a child, except those of mere amusement; and most of these contained such monstrous tales, and gross absurdities, as were ill calculated to regulate a roving imagination, or to produce one just or useful idea; but on the contrary, my brain was so crowded with giants, fairies, witches, and all the host of supernaturals, that I was afraid of sleeping alone, or of being left a moment in the dark! To such foolish fears, my love, you are happily a stranger. Your infant mind has never been exposed to groundless terrors; you have not been made 'to fear when no fear was.' Aware that there are trials enow before you, without disturbing your imagination with ideal alarms,

your *mother* would not needlessly startle or affright you.

Nevertheless, of one supernatural enemy it is necessary to apprize you; for, be assured, 'the devil as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour;' shall I not then exert myself to rescue one of the lambs of the flock from his power? For what can a poor helpless child do against so formidable an enemy? Are you not ready to say, 'I shall one day fall a prey to his teeth?' I should be ready to say so myself for you, did I not know from whence you may obtain strength. Remember the stripling David, with his sling and his stone; he went forth in the name of the Lord God of Israel; the same who can teach your 'hands to war, and your fingers to fight.' Say not you are weak: for 'to those that have no might he increaseth strength.'

You will soon, my child, arrive at that period of life, when you may expect formidable assaults from this adversary; hope not to pass on your way unmolested, for this ever watchful enemy is even now lying in wait, contriving his opportunity how he may best assail you: be then in a constant posture of defence, that by resisting the devil, he may flee from you. It is not by a life

of spiritual sloth and inactivity that you can expect to escape: the slothful man saith, 'There is a lion in the way, I shall be slain in the streets;' and so there is; and if he do not bestir himself, and prepare to resist him, he will find, to his cost, one much more formidable than his fears ever suggested.

As the pleasures of the world form the principal bait, employed by this adversary of unwary souls, what abundant occasion is there to warn the young against them! I would therefore say, at the commencement of your journey through it, O my child! 'love not the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.'

What a glorious spectacle is a *young* Christian! crucified to the world, and the world to him! What! a babe, counting all things but dross that he may win Christ? An *infant*, putting aside the little gewgaws that present themselves, with its hands lifted upward, and its eyes fixed on a heavenly crown! Can such a thing be? Yes: numerous are the examples of young heroes, who have 'resisted, even unto blood, striving against sin;' and who have 'come off conquerers, and more than conquerors, through him that loved them.'

I cannot, my child, within the limits of a short page or two, describe particularly all the various methods by which this formidable enemy makes his assaults; nor can I here furnish you with every weapon of defence: but many an illustrious character, who has fought the good fight, and is now wearing the crown of victory, beyond his reach, has left his armour and his weapons behind, as a legacy for others. To such I refer you; that so you may be enabled to resist, and to stand. I, like an affrighted and breathless traveller, accost you on the road, and warn you that there is assuredly a lion lying in wait: many a conflict I have sustained; many a time, but for succour from on high, I should have become his prey; but I press on to the city of habitation, where I shall be secure from his violence; and I counsel you to follow; keeping to the King's highway; turn not aside to the right hand or to the left; for those who pursue crooked paths will fall a prey to the destroyer. Be habitually watchful and on your guard; and let not the various avocations and occurrences of life obliterate from your memory, that 'the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.'

No. XVIII.

'They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

ISAIAH, chap. xl. ver. 31.

AND that you think is no great matter, my dear ***; for, whether you walk or run, you feel neither faint nor weary. Your active limbs, and your blithe spirits, seem equal to any exertion; but it will not be always so with you. The time will come, (unless you are cut off in the midst of your days) when 'the grasshopper will be a burden,' and when the keepers of the house shall tremble: then experience will teach you what it is to feel weariness with the smallest exertion; then you will be thoroughly qualified to appreciate the health you now enjoy; and will better understand the words I have selected for our meditation, whether they are figuratively or literally taken.

You are now, my child, in the morning of life; the sun has not risen far above your horizon; but mark his progress; presently the morning will be far advanced, and, before you are well aware,

it will be high noon: the day will then begin to decline, the shadows will be seen to lengthen, and twilight will dress all surrounding objects in its dusky hue. But I can hardly realize the idea that the round sprightly face I now behold shall one day have lost all its vivacity, and be covered with wrinkles! That the erect and agile form, now running to and fro with such alacrity, to supply my wants, and spare my labour, shall, in a few more years, stooping with age, and leaning on a staff, gladly receive those kind offices which it is now so willing to perform! May you receive them, my child! may the tender and assiduous care you now bestow on your parents descend with blessings on your head, when bending yourself under the infirmities of years!

But when this period arrives, what a mercy will it be, if, while you feel the outward man decaying, the inward man should be renewed, day by day! We are assured, that 'he that hath clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger:' that 'they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; that they shall be fat and flourishing, bringing forth fruit in old age.' These are powerful encouragements for you to devote your youth to God; and then you will have time for such growth and improvement. It is for the

confirmed Christian to walk the heavenly road, to run in the way of the commandments, without weariness or fainting: and though the soul of such should sometimes 'be weary because of the way,' yet it is his privilege to experience those divine consolations and supports, which are seldom the portion of such as make a late choice of the Christian life. The confirmed Christian runs without weariness in the spiritual road, though he is active in the service, and diligent in the work of his God; pursuing an even and steady course, he will walk without fainting, though assailed by many adversaries, because his eye is fixed on that better country, towards which he is travelling.

How blessed is a life so commenced, so persevered in, so concluded! And what an incalculable difference is there between an aged man and an aged saint! No wonder if the former should faint in the day of adversity, for his strength is small; no wonder the latter should walk courageously, even 'through the valley of the shadow of death,' for he has the rod and staff of God to comfort him.

Had these considerations their due weight, we should not see so many turn back and walk no more with him; nor should we have to deplore the conduct of those, who, with the young man in

the gospel, come *running*, yet go away sorrowful, when religion and their worldly possessions come in competition with each other. May the God of all grace so bless the means you have enjoyed, my child, that you may persevere unto the end! that you may 'so run as to obtain;' not 'walking in a vain show,' with 'feet swift to do evil;' but pursuing that path which 'is as the shining light, growing brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.'

No. XIX.

"Line upon line, precept upon precept."
ISAIAH, chap. xxviii. ver. 10.

THAT the human 'heart is desperately wicked,' is a truth as old as the fall of man. That we are apt to backslide and to 'depart from the living God,' will not be denied by those who believe and understand the sacred oracles: and from thence have been led to the study of their own hearts. We are 'turned aside like a broken bow;' constantly exposed to be led captive by the world, the flesh, and the devil; and there is no period of life without its peculiar temptations; but the season of youth, when the passions are lively, and the stock of experience which might regulate them is small, has the greatest need of divine instruction. Then it is that the new scenes which daily exhibit themselves to the view, and the sanguine hopes and expectations they produce, all conspire to alienate the mind from the chief good, and to make us forget our best interests.

Youth is not the season, nor is prosperity the

state, wherein we are most likely to remember what does not immediately present itself to the senses. 'I pray thee,' said Joseph, 'remember me, when thou art restored to thy butlership; yet did he not remember Joseph, but forgat him.' While there are few to whom it can be said, 'the Redeemer, whom having not seen ye love,' how many are there who plainly evince, by their walk and conversation, that God is not in all their thoughts! And even his chosen people, who have separated themselves from the world, and have 'set their affections on things above,' are too apt to be diverted by surrounding objects, and absorbed by the cares or the amusements of life.

What abundant need is there, then, in such a world, of line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little? and, blessed be God, these are afforded us; especially those of us who are favoured with a religious education, who, like Samuel, are early brought into the house of the Lord, and dedicated to him. Such, from constantly hearing the word of God, can be no strangers to his will; while they are generally furnished, by the society in which they dwell, with patterns and examples of a Christian life. It is true we are frail creatures, the very best of

us; and you will meet with none, my child, who have not something in temper or conduct, daily to struggle with, and deeply to lament; but look around among the heavenly family, and see if you cannot discern, here a virtue, there an amiable trait, which you may select for your own imitation. One amiable line is inscribed in fair characters on the life of this Christian; another, though perhaps less legibly, in that; momentous precepts are deeply engraven in the holy walk and conversation of some; and, even among the weak and feeble, the lambs of the flock, you will find here a little, and there a little: from all of which you may collect materials for your own improvement in the divine life.

And what, my child, are the daily acts of worship in which you join, when the Scriptures are read; and your dear father, in devout aspirations, breathes out his petition in behalf of his family; or, by praying over the word, renders it intelligible to the dark and ignorant mind? What are the public ordinances of the house of God, but line upon line, precept upon precept? Ah, my child! here my feelings make me pause: when I reflect on the dreary seasons of public worship which I have experienced, for forty years, through my infirmity, I may be pardoned if I utter a deep

groan: yet I would not indulge a useless regret. I would only say, 'He that *hath* ears to hear, let him hear;' but he will never be able to estimate the privilege of sitting at his ease, and hearing the truths of the gospel, without any of the extreme fatigue of listening which I endure, and the mortification of frequently finding the most laborious and painful efforts useless.

But, beside public ordinances and domestic worship, you, my child, have been shown the way to your closet, to seek instruction in that seclusion from the world, where your heavenly Father waits to be gracious, and to hear and answer your requests. In addition to all which, are those precepts, more frequent, and, perhaps, more forcible, which are communicated by the voice of conscience; a voice which *will* be heard, even by those who are strangers to the gospel. Whenever it addresses you, my child, consider it is another line, and another precept, added to the catalogue. I charge you respect this faithful monitor; do it no violence; should you no longer hear it, remember it is not dead, but sleepeth, and will meet you again at the bar of God. O may it not be your accuser at that day!

Finally, what are the changes and revolutions you continually witness in the world, but lines

and precepts to teach you the vanity and mutability of terrestrial things? From all these you may extract some spiritual improvement, and obtain some important lessons. The very misfortunes and calamities of others you may convert to your own benefit; and thus obtain honey from the dead carcass of the lion: so will you treasure up many a line, and many a precept, which are disregarded by those to whom they are more immediately addressed. Especially, let the arrow of death, as it smites around you, impress upon your memory the wholesome lesson of mortality. 'Prepare to meet thy God,' is a precept engraven by it, in such deep and legible characters, that he who runs may read: and that divine exhortation, 'Whatever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for that there is no work, nor knowledge, nor device in the grave, whither thou goest,' is as powerfully enforced by it.

And now, may not God say, 'What could I have done more to my vineyard?' What advantage do you lack for religious improvement? Why should you turn aside to the right hand or to the left, when directions meet you at every step, with, 'This is the way, walk ye in it?' If those who know not their Master's will, shall

nevertheless be beaten, how much more they who neglect it, notwithstanding such eminent advantages! But if my *** should be intrusted with a single talent, may she appear at the great day of account to have improved it to the uttermost; and hear the reviving approbation of her Judge, saying, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

No. XX.

'When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.'

1 Cor. chap. xiii. ver. 11.

Though your late determination, my ***, to lay aside the innocent amusements of your childhood, is in itself a trifling circumstance, yet I am not disposed to let it escape unnoticed; but shall endeavour to render your toys subservient to your improvement, at the moment when you are about to abandon them altogether. I believe the delight these companions of your childhood have afforded, will not soon be erased from your memory; nor was it a criminal or unreasonable delight. They beguiled many hours, which must otherwise have been tedious and uninteresting to a mind too feeble to be constantly engaged with more important matters; besides promoting habits of industry, and so exercising your ingenuity and contrivance, as to fit you, by degrees, for works of real utility, in the station of life you are most likely to occupy.

I have seen you, my dear girl, sitting surrounded by your little family, with an interest, which only a parent can feel; and I was pleased to reflect, that, at present, you had one source of delight, at least, incapable of producing much pain or anxiety. You fancied yourself a parent, but you were without a parent's cares; you had not to provide food for your household; neither were you anxious for their safety in your absence: where you left them, there you found them; and as neither mischievous habits nor untoward tempers vexed your spirit, so neither were you concerned for their future prospects: you thought not of your own beyond to-day, much less of those of your family.

So far you had the advantage of your mother; and still have: while you are laying these companions of your childhood aside, with all your hopes and expectations concerning them, her anxieties are kindled anew, and she looks to futurity with increasing interest. Your Lucillas and Matildas are thrown aside as useless lumber; not so my *** ; she is rising into fresh life, and, indeed, is only beginning to live. Now I watch with an anxious eye, lest any untoward circumstance should arise to give a permanent bias to her character: now, while the young shoots

spring up before me, I wait to see what direction they will take. Hitherto I have been able to prune and lead them at pleasure; but every day they may become less pliant; and every day my task may be more laborious. May the great Husbandman direct my unskilful hand, that I may prove a successful labourer in his vineyard!

And now, my ***, that the amusements of your childhood are relinquished, it is of importance to determine what is to be substituted in their room. You discover that you are not to live for the mere purpose of amusement; that the duties you owe to your God, to your fellow-creatures, and to yourself, now multiply upon you. It is not yet noon, but the sun is fast ascending from the eastern hills, and is so far advanced in his course, as to render it high time for you to rise and be doing. Know you not you have a structure to rear? and are you aware of the labour it will cost you? It will be wise, before you lay the foundation, to ascertain whether you are building on a rock or on the sand; that so, when the tempest assails you, (as assuredly it will) you may be proof against its violence. Know you not you have a race to run, and that to loiter is not so to run as to obtain? Know you not that you have a

battle to fight? Perceive you not three mighty champions, now girding on their armour for the conflict, even the World, the Flesh, and the Devil? Know you not that you have a treasure to win, even the pearl of great price, without which you must be everlastingly poor and necessitous?

And with all these important objects before you, can you stand one moment of the day idle? Nay, there are concerns, which, though of minor importance, do, nevertheless, imperiously demand your attention, because your own happiness, and that of others, is intimately connected with them. *Now* is the time to detect and subdue those irregularities of temper, and unamiable propensities, which, because they cannot be termed *vices*, are disregarded, and suffered to grow into confirmed habits, till, to eradicate them, some more powerful principle than the reason, or the philosophy of maturer years, must be employed. How lamentable is it to behold a character intrinsically good, marred and disfigured by manners, which, though not *intentionally* ill natured, do, nevertheless, so nearly resemble it, as to justify the mistake!—That 'a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,' is a remark that extends beyond its original application; for a

small fault in the temper, uncorrected, frequently diffuses itself through the whole character, till it appears, at last, altogether unamiable, spreads the contagion in a family, and renders every individual of it at once disagreeable and unhappy. Were you ever treated with pride and haughtiness? Did it not produce in your own bosom somewhat of a corresponding feeling? with passion, with peevishness, with unkindness and reserve; and were not the first emotions you felt on those occasions sufficient to convince you, that the most effectual method of rendering all amiable, as well as happy, around you, was to be so yourself.

But the time is now come, my child, when the occasions will be multiplied that must develop your character; *now*, therefore, much may be done; but when your faults become habitual, you will cease to credit their existence. Were you suddenly to observe your complexion ever so slightly changed, you would probably, endeavour to ascertain the cause, and, if possible, to counteract its effects; but should the alteration remain permanent, from ceasing to be observed, it might cease to be believed. To how many inestimable characters might the words of our Lord be addressed, though with a different meaning,

'*One thing* thou lackest!' some little fault, unobservable to strangers, may be the worm at the root, the goad in the side, the teasing straw, sufficient to mar the happiness of a whole house, and to prove that perfection is no where to be found in this lower world!

These considerations, my dear ***, make me earnestly desirous to lay a good foundation for your future character: sweet is the simplicity of childhood, but it is generally succeeded by a period most troublesome to a parent. As ignorant of the world as ever, it is now that young people begin to measure their wisdom by their stature, and to feel indignant at that reproof, which would nip their evil habits in the bud. They do not calculate on the costly lessons they have yet to learn; nor foresee how many of their words and actions, at the distance of a few years, they would gladly recal; how many of their notions and their prejudices, the world, the unyielding world, will compel them to relinquish; and thereby effect that, which was attempted in vain by a parent's rhetoric; nor do they know how long these changes will continue. How long? As long as they are imperfect creatures will they find occasion to confess, with every succeeding year, that they have been liable to errors in some

even of the most common concerns of life. But that is a lovely character which is not backward to acknowledge its mistakes; where the dignity of maturity is chastened by the simplicity of childhood; and that is, in general, the truest wisdom, which is more disposed to learn than to teach.

You see, my child, how anxious I am to prevent a self-sufficient temper, because it is the castle wherein a host of petty faults and follies may be maintained and defended; too insignificant, perhaps, to sally forth, and carry fire and sword before them, like the more gigantic vices; but which, nevertheless, may be troublesome depredators upon social happiness, and plunder many an hour of its peace and tranquillity. Would you banish them altogether from your bosom? Then *make human nature your study:* study it in others; cherish its best feelings in yourself; and then you will apply the golden rule, and be far from measuring all the prejudices and propensities of others by your own standard; as if that which appears of no importance to you, could not, or should not be esteemed of any value to them.

It was by this principle I regulated my conduct during your childhood; for in which of your joys and sorrows (such as they were) did I

appear uninterested? Can you now imagine that I greatly cared whether the chair was too large or too small for your doll? or whether her frock exactly fitted? (except as it indicated your skill in contriving it) yet, in the midst of cares and concerns of real importance, I had always an ear for your stories, were they long or short. If you were actually disconcerted by one of these (to me) trivial matters, I knew how difficult it would be to convince you they were no troubles at all, and how impossible to sooth your feelings by an inattentive manner, or a laconic reply: the most I could have achieved, by such conduct, would have been to exhibit before you an example of apparent insensibility; thereby incapacitating you to assuage the petty troubles, that will every day present themselves to your view, and solicit your aid, in future life. Every day does not furnish us with occasions to exhibit the more prominent Christian virtues; but every hour we may practise that sympathetic temper, that spirit of *genuine politeness*, as well as Christianity, which, if mutual, would render a house a paradise.

Bear this on your mind, my dear ***, and never practise a contrary conduct on others, till you find it is tolerable to yourself. Remember the

objects which now claim your attention are not wooden blocks, as formerly; but as they have bodies, capable of feeling pain and anguish, they have minds also, susceptible of far greater suffering. 'The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?'

Finally, cultivate *an humble spirit*, and suppress the first risings of *vanity*, that spoiler of the female mind. It often happens that when a girl lays aside her doll, she becomes one herself: a thing, on which to hang flounces and furbelows, beads and ribands! And who are captivated by such a spectacle? Not men and women, properly so called; but great children, only such as can be gratified by toys and baubles!

But, my dear ***, what did you hear when you rose this morning? It was the clock! It told you, probably, that it was an early hour; but it told you, too, that part of the day was already gone! And has not the circumstance that occasions the present address a similar meaning? Infancy and childhood are almost gone! You have arrived at the second stage of your journey! Ah! how rapidly will periods succeed each other! And what will the whole appear at the end of the race? Husband the fleeting moments; for remember, the time is hastening when all your

worldly pursuits will seem of little more importance than the amusements of your childhood. 'Seek *first*, then, the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." 'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth;' that so when death comes, be it early or late, you may be able to say, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.'

No. XXI.

'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.'

PROVERBS, chap. xxi. ver. 6.

IT would be happy for society, if all who admit the necessity of a pious education, would be careful to bestow it, when Providence has given them so important a charge as a child. When we behold the people of this world bringing up their children as themselves have been brought up, though we sigh at the gloomy prospect, we do not wonder: but when we observe the remissness of professed Christians, in this most important of all concerns, (no less than the forming of a citizen for both worlds;) when we see their offspring degenerate, and become a disgrace even to families, themselves degenerated; unfit both for earth and heaven; we can love neither God nor man, if we do not feel our spirits wounded, and our zeal stimulated, to direct the rising generation into the paths of peace.

Those parents feel no due love for their offspring, in whom it does not extend beyond the

present moment. If, to gratify them *now*, be all their ambition, they may find, when too late, that they have not only endangered their eternal happiness, but that they have laid the foundation of much misery for them in the present world. If such sacrifice the happiness of the man to the caprices of the infant, no wonder that they are regardless of the good of society, the welfare of generations yet unborn, on whom may descend, from the being they are thus indulging, accumulated miseries.

Such is the depraved state of human nature, that bad habits, and even flagrant vices, are far less likely to become extinct, in families where they have existed, than amiable qualities and Christian virtues. Where, then, is our public spirit? Where the love of our country, if we do not endeavour to stop the declension, and exert ourselves to render our posterity better, and therefore happier, when we are sleeping in the grave?

What a large proportion of the evils we endure from the prodigality, the rapacity, the malice, or the churlishness of others, may be fairly attributed to a wrong education! Of this I am myself so thoroughly convinced, that, when suffering under the effects of any of these vices, the

first thought that occurs to me is, 'I should not be thus injured if my oppressor had been properly educated.' So that I conceive myself wounded, rather by the hands of ancestors, than of contemporaries. Is it too much to say, that some of the trials which I have suffered, (though nothing has happened to me but what is common to men) may have originated, centuries back, in the silly indulgence of some clamorous child; to whom, as well as to its posterity, a short week's proper discipline might have proved a benefit more valuable than gold or rubies? The world, at the best, is but a wilderness; nevertheless, were our young plantations cultivated by more skilful hands, we should have fewer thorns and more roses; provided His blessing were sought, who alone can give that principle, which renders the character genuine and complete.

With such ideas as these, I resolved, if ever I became a parent, to do my best towards promoting the general weal, as well as the individual happiness of my own family. I have done comparatively little, because I had but little in my power. I could not bestow on my children advantages which I did not possess myself: but I have laboured, at least during their infancy and childhood, to lay a foundation on which them-

selves might build in maturer years. To give them a right bias, and prepare them for the reception of virtuous and pious principles, was the business and study of my life, at a period when this important work may be most easily begun; persuaded, that while it is drawing nutriment for its body, the tender mother may begin to pour a ray of instruction into the infant mind. Soon may she convince it, that its wishes cannot be gratified by clamour and passion; and while experience teaches it, that to open its mouth is the way to receive food, and that to open its hands will enable it to embrace its toys, it will almost as soon discover, that to be placid and good humoured is the only way to ensure the smiles of her, on whom it depends for all its enjoyments.

It is because parents are not sufficiently aware of the importance of *early* discipline, that we behold such turbulent passions, and subsequent misery, in families. But if discipline is to begin at all, (and who does not *intend* that it should?) what year of the darling's life would the fond parent determine upon, for the commencement of that which is deemed so difficult and painful a task? And then in what *day* of this momentous year is the operation to begin? Already the turbulent passions have broken forth; already they

menace parental government; and every day they gain additional strength and ascendency. Does the parent resolve to assume his authority to-morrow? Alas! if the resolution is really kept, what a sorrowful day will to-morrow be!

But educution has no fixed day for its commencement; except as it commences, in a certain degree, with the being of its subject. It does not *imply* corporeal punishment; severity is no feature of its character; (though some parents measure their management by the number of stripes dealt out among their still unruly families.) It professes no art, beyond the comprehension of the plainest understanding. Its process is simple, but *firm and unremitting*. Its foundation must be laid in a *persevering* subjugation of the child's will to that of the parent: this is the grand foundation stone, and those who build not upon it are rearing a structure on the sand, which will never be proof against the tempests of future life: well will it be if themselves are not overwhelmed in its fall.

My dear ***, you have often heard me say, that I like to do nothing for which I cannot, if I please, assign a reason. The above observations may account to you for some things, at which,

in your childish simplicity, you may have wondered. You perceive that I am jealous of my authority, and have an habitual sense of the propriety of filial subordination; conceiving it to be the best passport into a world, by no means inclined to surrender its will to others. The being who ushers forth from under the paternal roof, with passions unsubdued, because never controlled; with a will stubborn and unyielding, because unaccustomed to submit, had better at once assume the warrior's costume, and be furnished with his weapons; for assuredly he is marching into the field of battle, where he will encounter many a sturdy soldier, as ready to contend for sovereignty as himself.

Such considerations gave energy to my exertions, during your infant years. Years and lessons by you forgotten, though, happily, their effects still remain. Happy departed hours! I shall always recollect them with pleasure, when I laid the simple but firm foundation, on which your dear father has so ably built.

> 'Delightful task to rear the tender thought,
> To teach the young idea how to shoot.'

Yet though infancy is over, and childhood is far advanced, I do not conceive my work to be

concluded, or my task accomplished; but have employed my leisure hours, and some, indeed, that were not leisure, in endeavouring, by means of these addresses, to confirm those pious principles, which are indispensable to your present and future happiness. And how could I better obey the divine command, my ***, to 'train you up in the way you should go,' than by calling your attention, at the commencement of them, to the source of all the evil of which I was about to forewarn you; namely, to man's original transgression, and your own share in the guilt and misery incurred thereby? Surely when you see and feel the sad consequences of sin, you will aspire after holiness, and seek an interest in that promise which was given to the first transgressors. You learn that your days are 'few and evil,' and that you also must 'sleep with your fathers,' and make room for others, as others have done for you: *you* must go to your 'long home,' for 'here you have no continuing city.' These solemn truths I have endeavoured to impress on your mind, in the hope that you will not be one of those thoughtless creatures who say, 'Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years;' but rather, that you may press

forward to join that 'great multitude which no man can number,' by following their faith, and walking in their ways. To this end, will you not desire to be 'an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile? clothed with humility, and all the virtues and graces of the Christian? so making the hearts of your parents rejoice, when they behold 'the *olive*,' about which they have bestowed so much culture, prosper and flourish, and repay their labour of love. Human splendour will have little influence on your mind, if thus divinely cultivated: the poorest Christian will appear infinitely more lovely, in your eyes, than the loftiest sinner; and your ambition will be to join such company, and sit down with them at the divine command, waiting to be supplied by the bounties of Providence; and much more, by the riches of grace.

I have bestowed much labour in rearing a handmaid for the service of the sanctuary; now I wait for my reward: that 'what your hands find to do, you may do it with your might,' remembering that you will be accepted according to what you have, not according to what you have not. And may I not hope, too, that while you are wise unto salvation, you will have a portion of that wis-

dom and prudence which are necessary to your comfortable walk through the present world, and which form such an agreeable embellishment to the Christian character? that you may derive so much benefit from the sober lessons you have received, as will regulate your conduct towards your friends and acquaintances; and enable you to hold the balances with a steady hand, in your temporal, as well as in your spiritual concerns? having learned the necessity of attention to small matters, to 'the hyssop that groweth on the wall,' as well as to the lofty cedar. Nor are you so likely to fall a prey to him who 'goeth about seeking whom he may devour,' when you have been warned of his approach: but, with the divine blessing accompanying these instructions, though often assailed by 'the world, the flesh, and the devil,' you may, nevertheless, 'run and not be weary, walk and not faint.'

And am I too sanguine? Too sanguine, to expect to reap where I have not sown! Yes, if the seed should have fallen on stoney ground; or should the birds of the air carry it away; or should weeds spring up and choke it; then shall I have bestowed labour in vain, and have spent my strength for nought. But should it have been

scattered on good ground, (and to the great Husbandman I look for a blessing) then a joyful harvest is before me: and though I may not survive to reap it here below; yet great will be my joy to see my dear child brought by the angels, like 'a shock of corn fully ripe,' and lodged in the heavenly garner!!'

THE END.

1903

JAN 18